

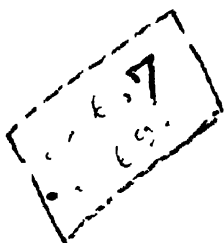
**The
Letters of
Samuel Taylor
COLERIDGE**

The Grey Walls Letters Series

GENERAL EDITOR: WREY_GARDINER

The
Letters of
Samuel Taylor
COLERIDGE

*Selected & with an
Introduction by*
KATHLEEN
RAINE



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Introduction

'THE largest and most spacious intellect in my judgment that ever yet existed among men.' Such a tribute as these words, written of Coleridge by de Quincey, has been paid to few. The truth of such a statement cannot in the nature of things be proved. But how easy it would be to disprove it by simply mentioning a few names, were there any such, beside which that of Coleridge would seem a small one. Our first thought is certainly to question de Quincey's estimate. What has Coleridge left to literature but a single great poem and a few fragments; much journalism, some lecture-notes and fragments, an autobiography, and a mass of projects. He has left no single work, in any of the several fields in which his intellect was active, on which his fame may rest. The confusion of his private life; his reputation—for which his own habit of self-accusation was largely responsible—for indolence; and the opium legend, have further obscured his glory with irrelevancies. But it is, above all, true of Coleridge, as Coleridge wrote of Milton, that he was little understood 'among men before whom he strode so far as to dwarf himself by the distance'. It has taken a hundred years for us to overtake the great creative thinkers of the early romantic movement, to be in a position to realise what worlds were opened by Coleridge, Goethe, and Blake. To quote a favourite saying of Coleridge's 'until you understand a writer's ignorance, presume yourself ignorant of his understanding'. No one will deny that Coleridge is a most difficult, not to say formidable writer. But only those who are content to remain 'ignorant of his understanding' are likely, on reflection, to differ very strongly from de Quincey's estimate of him.

Wordsworth said of Coleridge that his peculiar greatness lay in the combination of great talent with great genius. He was prodigiously learned, and at the same time one of the most

inspired poets who has ever lived. From his earliest childhood he devoured books, and was in the habit of reading for as much as eight hours a day. He was one of the last men of genius who attempted with any success that universality of knowledge that is characteristic of renaissance scholarship. As a little boy in the junior school of Christ's Hospital he was already reading Virgil for pleasure, and became in due course a fine classical scholar. But even as a boy he was also interested in science, and regularly visited his brother at the London hospital where he worked. Later in life, Humphry Davy became one of his closest friends; and in the last years it was another man of science, J. H. Green, that Coleridge chose as his collaborator in that monumental work of philosophy that was never to be completed.

Had Coleridge not been a major poet, he would still have been remembered as a great metaphysician. He is among the last of the theologians, and the first of the psychologists. With Blake he shares the honour of having discovered, a century before Freud, the unconscious mind, and many of its characteristics. He anticipated Freud's discovery that the record of the unconscious memory exists, in all its completeness, proof against forgetfulness and the passage of time. His theory of the imagination (though less developed than Blake's) anticipates Jung's hypothesis of an inner object of knowledge, as distinct from the external data known through the senses. Like Goethe, he saw clearly the psychological objections to a Newtonian explanation of phenomena of sensation in terms of external stimuli alone. At the same time, his observation of contemporary events was acute, and as a political journalist Coleridge influenced his own time more perhaps than any other single voice. Napoleon paid him the compliment of marking him out as a dangerous enemy.

Coleridge's protean greatness is abundantly displayed in his letters. His eloquence, in speech and writing, was always

proverbial; and with the full flow of his matchless rhetoric, he discourses on all subjects, high and low: poetry and metaphysics; his ill health and his financial anguish—both of which handicapped him throughout his life; Friendship and parental love alternate with pages on abstruse points of theology or details on the sales of *The Friend*. His correspondents reflect this many-sidedness. Southey and Wordsworth are, above all, the friends of the poet; Fstlin, the Unitarian, and Tulke, the Swedenborgian, friends of the theologian; Davy and Green of the speculative psychologist, Stuart of the political journalist. His letters to Poole, to the Morgans and the Gillmans, reveal Coleridge as a man of feeling, warm in friendship. The man who in argument swept all before him, was vulnerable in his affections. His most intimate letters reveal Coleridge as a man whose heart was made to be broken, for how could he have hoped to meet, in marriage or in friendship, a sympathy to match his own immense capacity for love?

In the early years it is Coleridge the man of feeling whom we most often meet in those effusive self-revelations that in this age, trained as we are rather not to feel, than to give expression to any tender emotion, are almost painfully embarrassing. The ready tears, the superlatives of friendship that were current among the Coleridge-Wordsworth circle seem to us sentimental and insincere. It may well be that it is we ourselves who have hardened our hearts, and have lost the capacity for feeling that they possessed in such a high degree. A more undoubted weakness revealed by these early letters, is a strain of self-justification, as of a man who feels himself vulnerable, and who is on the defensive before he is attacked. But as the years pass the self-justifications and self-exposures of the young man at the mercy of his feelings, give place to the voice of great genius, serene and certain of itself, the oracular utterance of 'the old lion in his sealed cavern', as Coleridge called himself in his latter days at Highgate. His literary style reflects the transmutation of

the shapeless enthusiastic features of the young poet, into that wonderful, enchanted unearthly face, framed in long hair prematurely whitened by the nocturnal suffering of the opium addict and dreamer of terrible dreams; a face radiant with the power that spiritual heroes bring back from the legendary descent into Hades.

Coleridge carried all his life a great burden of tragedy. His school days were unhappy, far from home and in the charge of a flogging schoolmaster. It was at school that he contracted rheumatic fever that affected his heart with the disease that gained upon him gradually and finally caused his death. His happiness at Cambridge was spoiled by worry about his college debts, and the pangs of first love. His marriage was unhappy from the outset, and the Cumberland fells on which Wordsworth and Dorothy drew strength from their native earth, were alien to Coleridge, who longed for warm lands of sunshine and intense light. The climate that gave Wordsworth his rainbows, gave Coleridge only rheumatism. Financial worries were with him always, as they must always be with any writer whose work is beyond the comprehension of his contemporaries. Half of the small annuity allowed him by the Wedgwood brothers was withdrawn when Coleridge most needed it; and even in his later years, when his pre-eminent greatness was recognised in some measure, he was weighed down by ill health, financial worry, and grief on account of Hartley's pathetic failure.

Yet the inner record of his soul is one of ever-increasing faith, acceptance, and spiritual joy. Suffering deepened but did not embitter him, and his growth in wisdom kept abreast of his vast knowledge. The young poet became the aged divine. Coleridge, like Blake and Goethe, had the wisdom both of youth and of age.

No writer worked harder, or wrote more voluminously than did Coleridge, a fact which makes the legend of his sloth

and procrastination all the more strange. And yet there is a measure of truth in it. For much that Coleridge wrote may well have been a kind of escapism from writing more lofty works, whose demands upon his faculties of thought and feeling were greater. No common mortal, who has no knowledge of the demands of genius—that 'divine ventriloquist'—has the right to judge Coleridge, but he judged himself, and knew that more was asked of him than he performed. The letter-writing habit was itself a symptom of this escapism. He wrote many wonderful letters—too many, and too wonderful. Often they reach that incandescence of thought and energy of language that characterises his finest prose and verse. But if his letters were often an escape from his genius, yet that genius is for that very reason often to be found reflected in them.

The present selection has been made from the large number of letters already published. Many more remain unpublished, and Mr. Griggs, editor of the *Unpublished Letters* of Coleridge, proposes some day to prepare a complete collection, which would run, one supposes, to many volumes. In the present selection I have regarded Coleridge's life, as he does himself in the *Biographia Literaria*, and as anyone must who comes near to his work, as a record not of events but of mental experiences. No life suffers more than does Coleridge's from any attempt to reduce it to the personal level. Ill health, humiliation and confusion characterise the outward history. Flashes of poetic vision, the deep soundings of metaphysical intuition and of spiritual revelation—these were the real events, these were the episodes that befell a man, hampered, in the physical world, by every ill, but spiritually a giant and an adventurer in all the countries of the imagination.

KATHLEEN RAINE

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I. To Thomas Poole

Coleridge wrote five autobiographical letters during the years 1797-8 to his friend Thomas Poole in the course of his residence at Nether Stowey, where he went in order to be near the friend to whose kindness he owed so much during the early years of his literary life. They are included in the Biographical Supplement to the Biographia Literaria. Coleridge also wrote, in 1832, an autobiographical note at the request of Gillman, in whose house he spent the last years of his life. This note forms part of the first chapter of Gillman's Life of Coleridge.

Monday, February, 1797.

MY DEAR POOLE,

I could inform the dullest author how he might write an interesting book. Let him relate the events of his own life with honesty, not disguising the feelings that accompanied them. I never yet read even a Methodist's Experience in the *Gospel Magazine* without receiving instruction and amusement; and I should almost despair of that man who could peruse the Life of John Woolman without an amelioration of heart. As to my Life, it has all the charms of variety,—high life and low life, vices and virtues, great folly and some wisdom. However, what I am depends on what I have been; and you, *my best Friend!* have a right to the narration. To me the task will be a useful one. It will renew and deepen my reflections on the past; and it will perhaps make you behold with no unforgiving or impatient eye those weaknesses and defects in my character, which so many untoward circumstances have concurred to plant there.

My family on my mother's side can be traced up, I know not how far. The Bowdons inherited a small farm in the Exmoor country, in the reign of Elizabeth, as I have been told, and, to my own knowledge, they have inherited nothing better since

that time. On my father's side I can rise no higher than my grandfather, who was born in the Hundred of Coleridge in the county of Devon, christened, educated, and apprenticed to the parish. He afterwards became a respectable woollen-draper in the town of South Molton. (I have mentioned these particulars, as the time may come in which it will be useful to be able to prove myself a genuine *sans-culotte*, my veins uncontaminated with one drop of gentility.) My father received a better education than the others of his family, in consequence of his own exertions, not of his superior advantages. When he was not quite sixteen years old, my grandfather became bankrupt, and by a series of misfortunes was reduced to extreme poverty. My father received the half of his last crown and his blessing, and walked off to seek his fortune. After he had proceeded a few miles, he sat him down on the side of the road, so overwhelmed with painful thoughts that he wept audibly. A gentleman passed by, who knew him, and, inquiring into his distresses, took my father with him, and settled him in a neighbouring town as a schoolmaster. His school increased and he got money and knowledge: for he commenced a severe and ardent student. Here, too, he married his first wife, by whom he had three daughters, all now alive. While his first wife lived, having scraped up money enough at the age of twenty he walked to Cambridge, entered at Sidney College, distinguished himself for Hebrew and Mathematics, and might have had a fellowship if he had not been married. He returned—his wife died. Judge Buller's father gave him the living of Ottery St. Mary, and put the present judge to school with him. He married my mother, by whom he had ten children, of whom I am the youngest, born October 20, 1772 . . .

2. To Thomas Poole

Sunday, March, 1797. 1797

MY DEAR POOLE,

My father (Vicar of, and Schoolmaster at, Ottery St. Mary, Devon) was a profound mathematician, and well versed in the Latin, Greek, and Oriental Languages. He published, or rather attempted to publish, several works; 1st, Miscellaneous Dissertations arising from the 17th and 18th Chapters of the Book of Judges; 2d, *Sententia excerptæ*, for the use of his own school; and 3d, his best work, a Critical Latin Grammar; in the preface to which he proposes a bold innovation in the names of the cases. My father's new nomenclature was not likely to become popular, although it must be allowed to be both sonorous and expressive. *Exempli gratia*, he calls the ablative the *quippe-quare-quale quis quidditive case*! My father made the world his confidant with respect to his learning and ingenuity, and the world seems to have kept the secret very faithfully. His various works, uncut, unthumbed, have been preserved free from all pollution. This piece of good luck promises to be hereditary; for all my compositions have the same amiable *home-studying* propensity. The truth is, my father was not a first-rate genius; he was, however, a first-rate Christian. I need not detain you with his character. In learning, good-heartedness, absentness of mind, and excessive ignorance of the world, he was a perfect Parson Adams.

My mother was an admirable economist, and managed exclusively. My eldest brother's name was John. He went over to the East Indies in the Company's service; he was a successful officer and a brave one, I have heard. He died of a consumption there about eight years ago. My second brother was called William. He went to Pembroke College, Oxford, and afterwards was assistant to Mr. Newcome's School, at Hackney. He died of a putrid fever the year before my father's death, and

just as he was on the eve of marriage with Miss Jane Hart, the eldest daughter of a very wealthy citizen of Exeter. My third brother, James, has been in the army since the age of sixteen, has married a woman of fortune, and now lives at Ottery St. Mary, a respectable man. My brother Edward, the wit of the family, went to Pembroke College, and afterwards to Salisbury, as assistant to Dr. Skinner. He married a woman twenty years older than his mother. She is dead, and he now lives at Ottery St. Mary. My fifth brother, George, was educated at Pembroke College, Oxford, and from there went to Mr. Newcome's, Hackney, on the death of William. He stayed there fourteen years, when the living of Ottery St. Mary was given him. There he has now a fine school, and has lately married Miss Jane Hart, who with beauty and wealth had remained a faithful widow to the memory of William for sixteen years. My brother George is a man of reflective mind and elegant genius. He possesses learning in a greater degree than any of the family, excepting myself. His manners are grave and hued over with a tender sadness. In his moral character he approaches every way nearer to perfection than any man I ever yet knew; indeed, he is worth the whole family in a lump. My sixth brother, Luke (indeed, the seventh, for one brother, the second, died in his infancy, and I had forgot to mention him), was bred as a medical man. He married Miss Sara Hart, and died at the age of twenty-two, leaving one child, a lovely boy, still alive. My brother Luke was a man of uncommon genius, a severe student, and a good man. The eighth child was a sister, Anne. She died a little after my brother Luke, aged twenty-one;

*Rest, gentle Shade! and wait thy Maker's will;
Then rise unchano'd. and be an Angel still!*

The ninth child was called Francis. He went out as a midshipman, under Admiral Graves. His ship lay on the Bengal coast, and he accidentally met his brother John, who took him to

land, and procured him a commission in the Army. He died from the effects of a delirious fever brought on by his excessive exertions at the siege of Seringapatam, at which his conduct had been so gallant, that Lord Cornwallis paid him a high compliment in the presence of the army, and presented him with a valuable gold watch, which my mother now has. All my brothers are remarkably handsome; but they were as inferior to Francis as I am to them. He went by the name of "the handsome Coleridge." The tenth and last child was S. T. Coleridge, the subject of these epistles, born (as I told you in my last) October 20, 1772. 1797

From October 20, 1772, to October 20, 1773. Christened Samuel Taylor Coleridge—my godfather's name being Samuel Taylor, Esq. I had another godfather (his name was Evans), and two godmothers, both called "Monday." From October 20, 1773, to October 20, 1774. In this year I was carelessly left by my nurse, ran to the fire, and pulled out a live coal—burnt myself dreadfully. While my hand was being dressed by a Mr. Young, I spoke for the first time (so my mother informs me) and said, "nasty Doctor Young!" The snatching at fire, and the circumstance of my first words, expressing hatred to professional men—are they at all *ominous*? This year I went to school. My schoolmistress, the very image of Shenstone's, was named Old Dame Key. She was nearly related to Sir Joshua Reynolds.

From October 20, 1774, to October 20, 1775. I was inoculated; which I mention because I distinctly remember it, and that my eyes were bound; at which I manifested so much obstinate indignation, that at last they removed the bandage, and unaffrighted I looked at the lancet, and suffered the scratch. At the close of the year I could read a chapter in the Bible.

Here I shall end, because the remaining years of my life *all* assisted to form *my particular mind*;—the three first years had nothing in them that seems to relate to it.

3. To Thomas Poole

1797

October 9, 1797.

MY DEAREST POOLE,

From March to October—a long silence! But [as] it is possible that I may have been preparing materials for future letters, the time cannot be considered as altogether subtracted from you.

From October, 1775, to October, 1778. These three years I continued at the Reading School, because I was too little to be trusted among my father's schoolboys. After breakfast I had a halfpenny given me, with which I bought three cakes at the baker's close by the school of my old mistress; and these were my dinner on every day except Saturday and Sunday, when I used to dine at home, and wallowed in a beef and pudding dinner. I am remarkably fond of beans and bacon; and this fondness I attribute to my father having given me a penny for having eat a large quantity of beans on Saturday. For the other boys did not like them, and as it was an economic food, my father thought that my attachment and penchant for it ought to be encouraged. My father was very fond of me, and I was my mother's darling: in consequence I was very miserable. For Molly, who had nursed my brother Francis, and was immoderately fond of him, hated me because my mother gave me now and then a bit of cake, when he had none,—quite forgetting that for one bit of cake which I had and he had not, he had twenty sops in the pan, and pieces of bread and butter with sugar on them from Molly, from whom I received only thumps and ill names.

So I became fretful and timorous, and a tell-tale; and the schoolboys drove me from play, and were always tormenting me, and hence I took no pleasure in boyish sports, but read incessantly. My father's sister kept an *everything* shop at Crediton, and there I read through all the gilt-cover little books that

could be had at that time, and likewise all the uncovered tales of Tom Hickathrift, Jack the Giant-killer, etc., etc., etc., etc. And I used to lie by the wall and *mope*, and my spirits used to come upon me suddenly; and in a flood of them I was accustomed to race up and down the churchyard, and act over all I had been reading, on the docks, the nettles, and the rank grass. At six years old I remember to have read Belisarius, Robinson Crusoe, and Philip Quarles; and then I found the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, one tale of which (the tale of a man who was compelled to seek for a pure virgin) made so deep an impression on me (I had read it in the evening while my mother was mending stockings), that I was haunted by spectres, whenever I was in the dark: and I distinctly remember the anxious and fearful eagerness with which I used to watch the window in which the books lay, and whenever the sun lay upon them I would seize it, carry it by the wall, and bask and read. My father found out the effect which these books had produced, and burnt them. 1797

So I became a *dreamer*, and acquired an indisposition to all bodily activity; and I was fæetful, and inordinately passionate, and as I could not play at anything, and was slothful, I was despised and hated by the boys; and because I could read and spell and had, I may truly say, a memory and understanding forced into almost an unnatural ripeness, I was flattered and wondered at by all the old women. And so I became very vain, and despised most of the boys that were at all near my own age, and before I was eight years old I was a *character*. Sensibility, imagination, vanity, sloth, and feelings of deep and bitter contempt for all who traversed the orbit of my understanding, were even then prominent and manifest.

From October, 1778, to 1779. That which I began to be from three to six I continued from six to nine. In this year [1778] I was admitted into the Grammar School, and soon outstripped all of my age. I had a dangerous putrid fever this

year. My brother George lay ill of the same fever in the next room. My poor brother Francis, I remember, stole up in spite of orders to the contrary, and sat by my bedside and read Pope's Homer to me. Frank had a violent love of beating me; but whenever that was superseded by any humour or circumstances, he was always very fond of me, and used to regard me with a strange mixture of admiration and contempt. Strange it was not, for he hated books, and loved climbing, fighting, playing and robbing orchards, to distraction.

My mother relates a story of me, which I repeat here, because it must be regarded as my first piece of wit. During my fever, I asked why Lady Northcote (our neighbour) did not come and see me. My mother said she was afraid of catching the fever. I was piqued, and answered, "Ah, Mamma! the four Angels round my bed an't afraid of catching it!" I suppose you know the prayer:—

*"Matthew! Mark! Luke and John!
God bless the bed which I lie on.
Four angels round me spread,
Two at my foot, and two at my head."*

This prayer I said nightly, and most firmly believed the truth of it. Frequently have I (half-awake and half-asleep, my body diseased and fevered by my imagination), seen armies of ugly things bursting in upon me, and these four angels keeping them off. In my next I shall carry on my life to my father's death.

God bless you, my dear Poole, and your affectionate.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

4. To Thomas Poole

October 16, 1797. 1797

DEAR POOLE,

From October, 1779, to October, 1781. I had asked my mother one evening to cut my cheese entire, so that I might toast it. This was no easy matter, it being a *crumbly* cheese. My mother, however, did it. I went into the garden for something or other, and in the mean time my brother Frank *minced* my cheese "to disappoint the favorite." I returned, saw the exploit, and in an agony of passion flew at Frank. He pretended to have been seriously hurt by my blow, flung himself on the ground, and there lay with outstretched limbs. I hung over him moaning, and in a great fright; he leaped up, and with a horse-laugh gave me a severe blow in the face. I seized a knife, and was running at him, when my mother came in and took me by the arm. I expected a flogging, and struggling from her I ran away to a hill at the bottom of which the Otter flows, about one mile from Ottery. There I stayed; my rage died away, but my obstinacy vanquished my fears, and taking out a little shilling book which had, at the end, morning and evening prayers, I very devoutly repeated them—thinking at the *same time* with inward and gloomy satisfaction how miserable my mother must be! I distinctly remember my feelings when I saw a Mr. Vaughan pass over the bridge, at about a furlong's distance, and how I watched the calves in the fields beyond the river. It grew dark and I fell asleep. It was towards the latter end of October, and it proved a dreadful stormy night. I felt the cold in my sleep, and dreamt that I was pulling the blanket over me, and actually pulled over me a dry thorn bush which lay on the hill. In my sleep I had rolled from the top of the hill to within three yards of the river, which flowed by the unfenced edge at the bottom. I awoke several times, and finding myself wet and stiff and cold, closed my eyes again that I might forget it.

1797 In the mean time my mother waited about half an hour, expecting my return when the *sulks* had evaporated. I not returning, she sent into the churchyard and round the town. Not found! Several men and all the boys were sent to ramble about and seek me. In vain! My mother was almost distracted; and at ten o'clock at night I was *cried* by the crier in Ottery, and in two villages near it, with a reward offered for me. No one went to bed; indeed, I believe half the town were up all the night. To return to myself. About five in the morning, or a little after, I was broad awake, and attempted to get up and walk; but I could not move. I saw the shepherds and workmen at a distance, and cried, but so faintly that it was impossible to hear me thirty yards off. And there I might have lain and died; for I was now almost given over, the ponds and even the river, near where I was lying, having been dragged. But by good luck, Sir Stafford Northcote, who had been out all night, resolved to make one other trial, and came so near that he heard me crying. He carried me in his arms for near a quarter of a mile, when we met my father and Sir Stafford's servants. I remember and never shall forget my father's face as he looked upon me while I lay in the servant's arms—so calm, and the tears stealing down his face; for I was the child of his old age. My mother as you may suppose, was outrageous with joy. [Meantime] in rushed a *young lady*, crying out, "I hope you'll whip him, Mrs. Coleridge!" This woman still lives in Ottery; and neither philosophy or religion have been able to conquer the antipathy which I *feel* towards her whenever I see her. I was put to bed and recovered in a day or so, but I was certainly injured. For I was weakly and subject to the ague for many years after.

My father (who had so little of parental ambition in him, that he had destined his children to be blacksmiths, etc., and had accomplished his intention but for my mother's pride and spirit of aggrandizing her family)—my father had, however,

resolved that I should be a parson. I read every book that came in my way without distinction; and my father was fond of me, and used to take me on his knee and hold long conversations with me. I remember that at eight years old I walked with him one winter evening from a farmer's house, a mile from Ottery, and he told me the names of the stars and how Jupiter was a thousand times larger than our world, and that the other twinkling stars were suns that had worlds rolling round them; and when I came home he shewed me how they rolled round. I heard him with a profound delight and admiration: but without the least mixture of wonder or incredulity. For from my early reading of fairy tales and genii, etc., etc., my mind had been habituated to *the Vast*, and I never regarded my *senses* in any way as the criteria of my belief. I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions, not by my *sight*, even at that age. Should children be permitted to read romances, and relations of giants and magicians and genii? I know all that has been said against it; but I have formed my faith in the affirmative. I know no other way of giving the mind a love of the Great and the Whole. Those who have been led to the same truths step by step, through the constant testimony of their senses, seem to me to want a sense which I possess. They contemplate nothing but *parts*, and all *parts* are necessarily little. And the universe to them is but a mass of *little things*. It is true, that the mind *may* become credulous and prone to superstition by the former method; but are not the experimentalists credulous even to madness in believing any absurdity, rather than believe the grandest truths, if they have not the testimony of their own sense in their favour? I have known some who have been *rationaly* educated, as it is styled. They were marked by a microscopic acuteness, but when they looked at great things, all became a blank and they saw nothing, and denied (very illogically) that anything could be seen, and uniformly put the negation of a power for the possession of a power, and called

the want of imagination judgment and the never being moved to rapture philosophy!

1797 Towards the latter end of September, 1781, my father went to Plymouth with my brother Francis, who was to go as midshipman under Admiral Graves, who was a friend of my father's. My father settled my brother, and returned October 4, 1781. He arrived at Exeter about six o'clock, and was pressed to take a bed there at the Harts', but he refused, and, to avoid their entreaties, he told them, that he had never been superstitious, but that the night before he had had a dream which had made a deep impression. He dreamt that Death had appeared to him as he is commonly painted, and touched him with his dart. Well, he returned home, and all his family, I excepted, were up. He told my mother his dream; but he was in high health and good spirits, and there was a bowl of punch made, and my father gave a long and particular account of his travel, and that he had placed Frank under a religious captain, etc. At length he went to bed, very well and in high spirits. A short time after he had lain down he complained of a pain in his bowels. My mother got him some peppermint water, and, after a pause, he said, "I am much better now, my dear!" and lay down again. In a minute my mother heard a noise in his throat, and spoke to him, but he did not answer; and she spoke repeatedly in vain. Her shriek awaked me, and I said, "Papa is dead!" I did not know of my father's return but I knew that he was expected. How I came to think of his death I cannot tell; but so it was. Dead he was. Some said it was the gout in the heart;—probably it was a fit of apoplexy. He was an Israelite without guile, simple, generous, and taking some Scripture texts in their literal sense, he was conscientiously indifferent to the good and the evil of this world.

God love you and

S. T. COLERIDGE.

5. To Thomas Poole

February 19, 1798. 1798

From October, 1781, to October, 1782.

After the death of my father, we of course changed houses, and I remained with my mother till the spring of 1782, and was a day-scholar to Parson Warren, my father's successor. He was not very deep, I believe; and I used to delight my mother by relating little instances of his deficiency in grammar knowledge,—every detracton from his merits seemed an oblation to the memory of my father, especially as Parson Warren did certainly *pulpitize* much better. Somewhere I think about April, 1782, Judge Buller, who had been educated by my father, sent for me, having procured a Christ's Hospital Presentation. I accordingly went to London, and was received by my mother's brother, Mr. Bowdon, a tobacconist and (at the same time) clerk to an underwriter. My uncle lived at the corner of the Stock Exchange and carried on his shop by means of a confidential servant, who, I suppose, fleeced him most unmercifully. He was a widower and had one daughter who lived with a Miss Cabriere, an old maid of great sensibilities and a taste for literature. Betsy Bowdon had obtained an unlimited influence over her mind, which she still retains. Mrs. Holt (for this is her name now) was not the kindest of daughters—but, indeed, my poor uncle would have wearied the patience and affection of an Euphrasia. He received me with great affection, and I stayed ten weeks at his house, during which time I went occasionally to Judge Buller's. My uncle was very proud of me, and used to carry me from coffee-house to coffee-house and tavern to tavern, where I drank and talked and disputed, as if I had been a man. Nothing was more common than for a large party to exclaim in my hearing that I was a *prodigy*, etc., etc., etc., so that while I remained at my uncle's

I was most completely spoiled and pampered, both mind and body.

1798 At length the time came, and I donned the *blue* coat and yellow stockings and was sent down into Hertford, a town twenty miles from London, where there are about three hundred of the younger Blue-Coat boys. At Hertford I was very happy, on the whole, for I had plenty to eat and drink, and pudding and vegetables almost every day. I stayed there six weeks, and then was drafted up to the great school at London, where I arrived in September, 1782, and was placed in the second ward, then called Jefferies' Ward, and in the under Grammar School. There are twelve wards or dormitories of unequal sizes, beside the sick ward, in the great school, and they contained all together seven hundred boys, of whom I think nearly one-third were the sons of clergymen The boys were, when I was admitted, under excessive subordination to each other, according to rank in school; and every ward was governed by four Monitors (appointed by the *Steward*, who was the supreme Governor out of school,—our temporal lord), and by four *Markers*, who wore silver medals and were appointed by the Head Grammar Master, who was our supreme spiritual lord. The same boys were commonly both monitors and markers. We read in classes on Sundays to our *Markers*, and were catechized by them, and under their sole authority during prayers, etc. All other authority was in the monitors; but, as I said, the same boys were ordinarily both the one and the other. Our diet was very scanty. Every morning, a bit of dry bread and some bad small beer. Every evening, a larger piece of bread and cheese or butter, whichever we liked. For dinner,—on Sunday, boiled beef and broth; Monday, bread and butter, and milk and water; on Tuesday, roast mutton; Wednesday, bread and butter, and rice milk; Thursday, boiled beef and broth; Saturday, bread and butter, and pease-porridge. Our food was portioned; and,

excepting on Wednesdays, I never had a belly full. Our appetites were *damped*, never satisfied; and we had no vegetables.

S. T. COLERIDGE. 1785

6. To His Mother

February 4, 1785 [*London, Christ's Hospital*]

DEAR MOTHER,

I received your letter with pleasure on the second instant, and should have had it sooner, but that we had not a holiday before last Tuesday, when my brother delivered it me. I also with gratitude received the two handkerchiefs and the half-a-crown from Mr. Badcock, to whom I would be glad if you would give my thanks. I shall be more careful of the somme, as I now consider that were it not for my kind friends I should be as destitute of many little necessities as some of my school-fellows are; and Thank God and my relations for them! My brother Luke saw Mr. James Sorrel, who gave my brother a half-a-crown from Mrs. Smerdon, but mentioned not a word of the plumb cake, and said he would call again. Return my most respectful thanks to Mrs. Smerdon for her kind favour. My aunt was so kind as to accommodate me with a box. I suppose my sister Anna's beauty has many admirers. My brother Luke says that Burke's Art of Speaking would be of great use to me. If Master Sam and Harry Badcock are not gone out of (Ottery), give my kindest love to them. Give my compliments to Mr. Blake and Miss Atkinson, Mr. and Mrs. Smerdon, Mr. and Mrs. Clapp, and all other friends in the country. My uncle, aunt, and cousins join with myself and Brother in love to my sisters, and hope they are well, as I, your dutiful son,

S.^r COLERIDGE, am at present.

P.S. Give my kind love to Nobby.

7. To The Rev. George Coleridge

1790 *George Coleridge took the place of a father to his younger brother, and nearly all Coleridge's letters home are addressed, not to his mother, but to George.*

[Undated, from Christ's Hospital, before 1790.]

DEAR BROTHER,

You will excuse me for reminding you that, as our holidays commence next week, and I shall go out a good deal, a good pair of breeches will be no inconsiderable accession to my appearance. For though my present pair are excellent for the purposes of drawing mathematical figures on them, and though a walking thought, sonnet, or epigram would appear on them in very *splendid* type, yet they are not altogether so well adapted for a female eye—not to mention that I should have the charge of vanity brought against me for wearing a looking-glass. I hope you have got rid of your cold—and I am your affectionate brother

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

P.S. Can you let me have them time enough for re-adaptation before Whitsunday? I mean that they may be made up for me before that time.

8. To George Coleridge

[October, 1791.]

DEAR BROTHER,

As I am now settled in my rooms, and as College Business is commenced, I shall be able to give you some little account of matters. We go to Chapel twice a day. Every time we miss, we pay twopence, and fourpence on Surplice days, id est, Sundays, Saints' days and the eves of Saints' days. I am remarkably religious on an economical plan.

We have mathematical lectures, once a day, Euclid and Algebra alternately. I read Mathematics three hours a day, by which means I am always considerably before the lectures, 1791 which are very good ones. Classical lectures we have had none yet, nor shall I be often *bored* with them. They are seldom given, and when given, very thinly attended. After tea (N.B. sugar is very dear) I read classics till I go to bed, viz., eleven o'clock. If I were to read on as I do now, there is not the least doubt, that I should be a classical medallist and very high Wrangler; but *freshmen* always *begin* very *furiously*. I am reading Pindar, and composing Greek verse like a mad dog. I am very fond of Greek verse, and shall try hard for the Brown's Prize Ode. At my leisure hours I translate Anacreon. I have translated the first, the second, the 28th, the 32nd, the 43rd and the 46th Odes. Middleton* thinks I have translated the 32nd ἄγρ' αὐτοῦ ποτὶ ἄριστον very well. I think between us both we might translate him entirely. You *have* translated six or 7, have you not?

Dr. Pierce† is not come up to College yet. The Rustat Scholarship will be worth to me 27 pound a year. There is a new regulation at our College, they tell me, that, without any exception, the man who takes the highest honours in his year of the candidates, is to be elected Fellow. This will be a bit of a stimulus to my exertions.

There is no such thing as *discipline* at our College. There was once, they say, but so long ago that no one remembers it. Dr. Pierce, if I am not very much misinformed, will introduce it with a vengeance this year. We have had so very large an admittance that it will be absolutely necessary.

*T. F. Middleton. A fellow-student of Coleridge's at Christ's Hospital and Cambridge.

†Master of Jesus.

1791 We do one declamation every term—two are spoken in a week, one English, one Latin. Consequently, when the college was very thin, the men were pestered with two or three in a term. Themes and verses are in disuse at our College. Whether the doctor intends to reintroduce them or no, I cannot tell.

I have a most violent cold in my head, a favour which I owe to the dampness of my rooms. The Rustat Scholarship depends in some measure upon residence; otherwise it would be worth thirty pound a year to me. But I should lose by this gain; while in the country, I can be at no expence; but unnecessary residence is a very *costly* thing.

Le Grice* will send me a parcel in a few days. Pray let me hear from you.

My compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow and believe me with love and gratitude

Yours

S. T. COLERIDGE.

9. To The Rev. George Coleridge

The winning candidate for the Craven scholarship was Samuel Butler, later Bishop of Country, father of the novelist. John Keate, afterwards headmaster of Eton, was awarded the scholarship the following year. Bethel (according to Gillman's Life of Coleridge), was later 'one of the members for Yorkshire.'

[February, 1793.]

DEAR BROTHER,

Our fate is at last decided; and I, as I expected, in the^d number of the unsuccessfull. After an examination of six days' continuance our number was reduced from seventeen to four. The survivors were Bethel and Keate of King's, Butler of St.

*Le Grice, C.V. Le Grice and his brother were at school and at Cambridge with Coleridge. Author of "College Reminiscences of Coleridge," an article in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

John's and myself. We then underwent a different process of examination, after which the Vice-chancellor sent for Butler and informed him, that between those, who had been dismissed, and the four, who had been retained, the distinction was wide and marked; but that we had proved so very equal that the examiners were long undecided, but had at last determined in his favour, because from his age he deserved it the most (he is the youngest of us) and because they thought him the *most proper* to receive it. I believe, he is a Sizar. As to myself I am perfectly satisfied both with the mode of examination and the event of it; but our Master, Dr. Pierce, who conceives the most hyperbolic ideas of my abilities, and had entertained the most sanguine expectation of my success, is sadly chagrined—nay, he went so far, as to tell me in confidence, that I had not had fair play. "No composition in Greek Prose, none in Greek Verse, no original English composition! You would have beat them hollow, I know you would," etc. But I have no reason to complain, as, if you except the above-mentioned articles, I verily believe we circumnavigated the Encyclopaedia. So very severe an examination was never remembered. I have this oil to pour into the wound of my vanity: my information is certain and authentic that the most elegant scholar among the examiners gave a decided vote in my favor. Dr. Pierce has given me the Librarian and Chapel clerk's Place. It is worth thirty-three pound a year; but then I cannot be absent from chapel above three or four times a week, and I must get up to Chapel almost every morning; but all good things have their contingencies of evil.

I am now employing myself *omni Marte* in translating the best lyric poems from the Greek, and the modern Latin Writers, which I mean, in about half-a-year's time, to publish by subscription. By means of Caldwell, Tuckett, and Middleton I can ensure more than two hundred subscribers; so that this and frugality will enable me to pay my debts, which have

1793 corroded my spirits greatly for some time past. I owe about fifty pounds to my Tutor, and above eight pounds elsewhere. The debt to my Tutor is entirely the arrears of my two first Quarters, and I have owed it to him ever since. My income from the school is forty pounds, from the Rustat Scholarship this year it will be about twenty-three pounds, or perhaps a little more; from the Chapel Clerkship thirty-two pounds. And as I eat no supper or tea, and keep little company my expenses this year, *excluding* travelling into Devonshire, will be about fifty pounds, so that I shall be nearly twenty-five pounds plus. My commons I have for nothing, they being included in the Chapel Clerkship, so that it is little expense to be resident. I think therefore of staying all the summer in Cambridge, which will increase my Rustat Scholarship to thirty pounds. Such are my accounts. I have been lesson'd by the wholesome discipline of experience, that *Nemo felix qui debet* and I hope that I shall be the happier man for it.

I trust that your indisposition has been completely removed by the peace and quiet of Ottery. My anxiety concerning the scholarship did not so insulate me, but that my fancy frequently wandered there. The state of your health indeed, when you quitted Hackney, was such as demanded solitude.

Pray let me hear from you as soon as possible. Give my duty to my mother, whom I will write in a few days, and my love to my sister, my compliments to Mrs. Hodge, etc. etc.; and believe me with affection

Your grateful and obliged

S. T. COLERIDGE.

10. To Mary Evans

Coleridge was taken to the Evans' home by a school friend, and 1793
Mrs. Evans, in his own words, 'taught me what it was to have a
mother. I loved her as such. She had three daughters, and of course
I fell in love with the oldest.'—Mary. [Gillman's Life of Coleridge,
p. 28.]

Jesus College, Cambridge, February 7, 1793.

I would to Heaven, my dear Miss Evans, that the god of wit, or news, or politics would whisper in my ear something that might be worth sending fifty-four miles—but alas! I am so closely blocked by an army of misfortunes that really there is no passage left open for mirth or anything else. Now, just to give you a few articles in the large inventory of my calamities. Imprimis, a gloomy, uncomfortable morning. Item, my head aches. Item, the Dean has set me a swinging imposition for missing morning chapel. Item, of the two only coats which I am worth in the world, both have holes in the elbows. Item, Mr. Newton, our mathematical lecturer, has recovered from an illness. But the story is rather a laughable one, so I must tell it you. Mr. Newton (a tall, thin man with a little, tiny, blushing face) is a great botanist. Last Sunday, as he was strolling out with a friend of his, some curious plant suddenly caught his eye. He turned round his head with great eagerness to call his companion to a participation of discovery, and unfortunately continuing to walk forward he fell into a pool, deep, muddy, and full of chickweed. I was lucky enough to meet him as he was entering the college gates on his return (a sight I would not have lost for the Indies), his best black clothes all green with duck-weed, he shivering and dripping, in short a perfect river god. I went up to him (you must understand we hate each other most cordially) and sympathized with him in all the tenderness of condolence. The consequence of his misadventure was a violent cold attended with fever, which

1793 confined him to his room; prevented him from giving lectures, and freed me from the necessity of attending them; but this misfortune I supported with truly Christian fortitude. However, I constantly asked after his health with filial anxiety, and this morning, making my usual inquiries, I was informed, to my infinite astonishment and vexation, that he was perfectly recovered and intended to give lectures this very day! Verily, I swear that six of his duteous pupils—myself as their general—sallied forth to the apothecary's house with a fixed determination to thrash him for having performed so speedy a cure, but, luckily for himself, the rascal was not at home. But here comes my fiddling master, for (but this is a secret) I am learning to play on the violin. Twit, twat, twat, twit! "Pray, M. de la Penche, do you think I shall ever make anything of this violin? Do you think I have an ear for music?" "Un magnifique! Un superbel! Par honneur, sir, you be a ver great genius in de music. Good morning, monsieur!" This M. de la Penche is a better judge than I thought for.

This new whim of mine is partly a scheme of self-defence. Three neighbours have run music-mad lately—two of them fiddle-scrappers, the third a flute-tooter—and are perpetually annoying me with their vile performances, compared with which the gruntings of a whole herd of sows would be seraphic melody. Now I hope, by frequently playing myself, to render my ear callous. Besides, the evils of life are crowding upon me, and music is "the sweetest assuager of cares." It helps to relieve and soothe the mind, and is a sort of refuge from calamity, from slights and neglects and censures and insults and disappointments; from the warmth of real enemies and the coldness of pretended friends; from your *well wishers* (as they are justly called, in opposition, I suppose, to *well doers*), men whose inclinations to serve you always decrease in a most mathematical proportion as their opportunities to do it increase; from the—

"Proud man's contumely, and the spurns
Which patient merit of th' unworthy takes;" .

1793

from grievances that are the growth of all times and places and not peculiar to *this age*, which authors call this *critical age*, and divines this *sinful age*, and politicians *this age of revolutions*. An acquaintance of mine calls it this *learned age* in due reverence to his own abilities, and like Monsieur Whatd'ye-call him, who used to pull off his hat when he spoke of himself. The poet laureate calls it "*this golden age*," and with good reason,—

*For him the fountains with Canary flow,
And, best of fruit, spontaneous guineas grow.*

Pope, in his "Dunciad," makes it *this leaden age*, but I choose to call it without an epithet, *this age*. Many things we must expect to meet with which it would be hard to bear, if a compensation were not found in honest endeavours to do well, in virtuous affections and connections, and in harmless and reasonable amusements. And why should *not* a man amuse himself sometimes? *Vive la bagatelle!*

I received a letter this morning from my friend Allen. He is up to his ears in business, and I sincerely congratulate him upon it—occupation, I am convinced, being the great secret of happiness. "Nothing makes the temper so fretful as indolence," said a young lady who, beneath the soft surface of feminine delicacy, possesses a mind acute by nature, and strengthened by habits of reflection. 'Pon my word, Miss Evans, I beg your pardon a thousand times for bepraising you to your face, but, really, I have written so long that I had forgot to whom I was writing.

Have you read Mr. Fox's letter to the Westminster electors? It is quite the political *ho* at Cambridge, and has converted many souls to the Foxite faith.

1793 Have you seen the Siddons this season? or the Jordan? An acquaintance of mine has a tragedy^l coming out early in the next season, the principal character of which Mrs. Siddons will act. He has importuned me to write the prologue and epilogue, but, conscious of my inability, I have excused myself with a jest, and told him I was too good a Christian to be accessory to the damnation of anything. "

There is an old proverb of a river of words and a spoonful of sense, and I think this letter has been a pretty good proof of it. But as nonsense is better than blank paper, I will fill this side with a song I wrote lately. My friend, Charles Hague the composer, will set it to wild music. I shall sing it, and accompany myself on the violin. *Ca ira!*

Cathloma, who reigned in the Highlands of Scotland about two hundred years after the birth of our Saviour, was defeated and killed in a war with a neighbouring prince, and Nina Thoma his daughter (according to the custom of those times and that country) was imprisoned in a cave by the seaside. This is supposed to be her complaint:—

*How long will ye round me be swelling,
O ye blue-tumbling waves of the sea?
Not always in caves was my dwelling,
Nor beneath the cold blast of the Tree;*

*Thro' the high sounding Hall of Cathloma
In the steps of my beauty I strayed,
The warriors beheld Nina Thoma,
And they blessed the dark-tressed Maid!*

*By my Friends, by my Lovers discarded,
Like the Flower of the Rock now I waste,
That lifts its fair head unregarded,
And scatters its leaves on the blast.*

*A Ghost! by my cavern it darted!
In moonbeam the spirit was drest—
For lovely appear the Departed,
When they visit the dreams of my rest!*

1793

*But dispersed by the tempest's commotion,
Fleet the shadowy forms of Delight;
Ah! cease, thou shrill blast of the Ocean!
To howl thro' my Cavern by night.*

Are you asleep, my dear Mary? I have administered rather a strong dose of opium; however, if in the course of your nap you should chance to dream that I am, with ardor of eternal friendship, your affectionate

S. T. COLERIDGE,

you will never have dreamt a truer dream in all your days.

II. To G. L. Tuckett

On 2nd December, 1793, Coleridge, desperately worried by his debts in Cambridge, enlisted in the 15th or King's Regiment of Light Dragoons, under the name of Silas Tomkyn Comberbacke. His family came to his aid, and procured his release on 7th April, 1794.

It was G. L. Tuckett who broke the news to Coleridge's family, that he had run away from Cambridge and enlisted in the army.

Henley, Thursday night, February 6 [1794].

DEAR TUCKETT,

I have this moment received your long letter! The Tuesday before last, an accident of the Reading Fair, our regiment was disposed of for the week in and about the towns within ten miles of Reading, and, as it was not known before we set off to

1794 what places we would go, my letters were kept at the Reading post-office till our return. I was conveyed to Henley-upon-Thames, which place our regiment left last Tuesday; but I am ordered to remain on account of these dreadfully troublesome eruptions, and that I might nurse my comrade, who last Friday sickened of the confluent smallpox. So here I am, *videlicet* the Henley workhouse. It is a little house of one apartment situated in the midst of a large garden, about a hundred yards from the house. It is four strides in length and three in breadth; has four windows, which look to all the winds. The almost total want of sleep, the putrid smell, and the fatiguing struggles with my poor comrade during his delirium are nearly too much for me in my present state. In return I enjoy external peace, and kind and respectful behaviour from the people of the workhouse. Tuckett, your motives must have been excellent ones; how could they be otherwise! As an *agent*, therefore, you are blameless, but your efforts in my behalf demand my gratitude—that my heart will pay you, into whatever depth of horror your mistaken activity may eventually have precipitated me. As an *agent*, you stand acquitted, but the action was *morally* base. In an hour of extreme anguish, under the most solemn imposition of secrecy, I entrusted my place and residence to the young men at Christ's Hospital; the intelligence which you extorted from their imbecility should have remained sacred with you. It lost not the obligation of secrecy by the transfer. But your *motives* justify you? To the eye of your friendship the divulging might have appeared *necessary*, but what shadow of *necessity* is there to excuse you in showing my letters—to stab the very heart of confidence. You have acted, Tuckett, so uniformly well that reproof must be new to you. I doubtless shall have offended you. I would to God that I, too, possessed the tender irritableness of unhandled sensibility. Mine is a sensibility gangrened with inward corruption and the keen searching of the air from without. You gossip with the

commanding officer seems so totally useless and unmotivated that I almost find a difficulty in believing it.

A letter from my brother George! I feel a kind of pleasure 1794 that it is not directed—it lies unopened—am I not already sufficiently miserable? The anguish of those who love me, of him beneath the shadow of whose protection I grew up—does it not plant the pillow with thorns and make my dreams full of terrors? Yet I dare not burn the letter—it seems as if there were a horror in the action. One pang, however acute, is better than long-continued solicitude. My brother George possessed the cheering consolation of conscience—but I am talking I know not what—yet there is a pleasure, doubtless an exquisite pleasure, mingled up in the most painful of our virtuous emotions. Alas! my poor mother! What an intolerable weight of guilt is suspended over my head by a hair on one hand; and it I endure to live—the look ever downward—insult, pity, hell! God or Chaos, preserve me! What but infinite Wisdom or infinite Confusion can do it?

12. To the Rev. George Coleridge

February 8, 1794.

My more than brother! What shall I say? What shall I write to you? Shall I profess an abhorrence of my past conduct? Ah me! too well do I know its iniquity! But to abhor! this feeble and exhausted heart supplies not so strong an emotion. O my wayward soul! I have been a fool even to madness. What shall I dare to promise? My mind is illegible to myself. I am lost in the labyrinth, the trackless wilderness of my own bosom. Truly may I say, "I am wearied of being saved." My frame is chill and torpid. The ebb and flow of my hopes and fears has stagnated into recklessness. One wish only can I read distinctly in

1794 my heart, that it were possible for me to be forgotten as though I had never been! The shame and sorrow of those who loved me! The anguish of him who protected me from my childhood upwards, the sore travail of her who bore me! Intolerable images of horror! They haunt my sleep, they enfever my dreams! O that the shadow of Death were on my eyelids, that I were like the loathsome form by which I now sit! O that without guilt I might ask of my Maker annihilation! My brother, my brother! pray for me, comfort me, my brother! I am very wretched, and, though my complaint be bitter, my stroke is heavier than my groaning.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

13. To Captain James Coleridge

February 20, 1794.

In a mind which vice has not utterly divested of sensibility, few occurrences can inflict a more acute pang than the receiving proofs of tenderness and love where only resentment and reproach were expected and deserved. The gentle voice of conscience which had incessantly murmured within the soul then raises its tone and speaks with a tongue of thunder. My conduct towards you, and towards my other brothers, has displayed a strange combination of madness, ingratitude, and dishonesty. But you forgive me. May my Maker, forgive me! May the time arrive when I shall have forgiven myself!

With regard to my emancipation, every inquiry I have made, every piece of intelligence I could collect, alike tend to assure me that it may be done by *interest*, but not by negotiation without an expense which I should tremble to write. Forty guineas were offered for a discharge the day after a young man was sworn in, and were refused. His friends made interest,

and his discharge came down from the War Office. If, however, negotiation *must* be first attempted, it will be expedient to write to our colonel—his name is Gwynne—he holds the rank of general in the army. His address is General Gwynne, K.L.D., King's Mews, London. 1794

My assumed name is Silas Tomkyn Comberbacke, 15th, or King's Regiment of Light Dragoons, G Troop. My *number* I do not know. It is of no import. The bounty I received was six guineas and a half; but a light horseman's bounty is a mere lure; it is expended for him in things which he must have had without a bounty—gaiters, a pair of leather breeches, stable jacket, and shell; horse cloth, surcingle, watering bridle, brushes, and the long etc. of military accoutrement. I *enlisted* the 2d of December, 1793, was attested and sworn the 4th. I am at present nurse to a sick man, and shall, I believe, stay at Henley another week. There will be a large draught from our regiment to complete our troops abroad. The men were picked out to-day. I suppose I am not one, being a very indocile equestrian. Farewell

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Our regiment is at Reading, and Hounslow, and Maidenhead, and Kensington; our headquarters, Reading, Berks. The commanding officer there, Lieutenant Hopkinson, our adjutant.

To Captain James Coleridge, Tiverton, Devonshire.

14. To George Coleridge

Sunday night, Feb. 23, 1794.

My Brother would have heard from me long ere this had I not been unwell, unwell indeed—I verily thought, that I was hastening to that quiet Bourn, where grief is hush'd—

And when my recovered strength would have enabled me to have written to you, so utterly dejected were my spirits, that my letter would have displayed such a hopelessness of all future comfort, as would have approached to ingratitude—

Pardon me, my more than Brother! if it be the sickly jealousy of a mind sore in the “self-contracted miseries,” but was your last letter written in the same tone of tenderness with your former! Ah me! what awaits me from within and without, after the first tumult of Pity shall have subsided—Well were it, if the consciousness of having merited it, could arm my heart to the patient endurance of it—

Sweet in the sight of God and celestial Spirits are the tears of Penitance—the pearls of heaven—the wine of Angels! Such has been the language of Divines, but Divines have exaggerated. Repentance may bestow that tranquillity, which will enable man to pursue a course of undeviating harmlessness, but it cannot restore to the mind that inward sense of Dignity, which is the Parent of every kindling energy! I am not what I was:—*Disgust—I feel*, as if I had jaundiced all my Faculties.

I laugh almost like an insane person when I cast my eye backward on the prospect of my past two years. What a gloomy *Huddle* of eccentric actions, and dim-discovered motives! To real happiness I bade adieu from the moment I received my first ‘Tutors’ Bill’; since that time, since that period my mind has been irradiated by Bursts only, of sunshine, at all other times gloomy with clouds, or turbulent with tempests. Instead of manfully disclosing the disease, I concealed it with a shameful cowardice of sensibility, till it cankered my very Heart. I became a proverb to the University for Idleness. The time, which I should have bestowed on the academic studies, I employed in dreaming out wild schemes of impossible exarication. It had been better for me, if my Imagination had been less vivid. I could not with such facility have

shoved aside Reflection! How many and how many hours have I stolen from the bitterness of Truth in these soul-ennervating Reveries—in building magnificent edifices of Happiness on some fleeting shadow of Reality! My affairs became more and more involved. I fled to Debauchery; fled pure silent, and solitary Anguish to all the uproar of senseless mirth. Having, or imagining that I had, no stock of Happiness to which I could look forward, I seized the empty gratifications of the moment, and snatched at the Foam, as the wave passed by me. I feel a painful blush on my cheek, while I write it, but even for the Un. Scholarship, for which I affected to have read so severely, I did not read three days uninterruptedly—for the whole six weeks, that preceded the examination, I was almost constantly intoxicated! My Brother! you shudder as you read. 1794

When the state of my affairs became known to you and by your exertions and my Brothers' generous Confidence a fair Road seemed open to extrication, Almighty God! what a sequel I loitered away more money on the road, and in town than it was possible for me to justify to my Conscience; and when I returned to Cambridge a multitude of petty embarrassments buzzed round me, like a nest of Hornets, Embarrassments, which in my wild carelessness I had forgotten, and many of which I had contracted almost without knowing it. So small a sum remained, that I could not shock my Tutor with it. My agitations were delirium—I formed a Party, dined to London at eleven o'clock at night, and for three days lived in all the tempest of Pleasure—resolved on my return—but I will not shock your religious feelings. I again returned to Cambridge—staid a week—such a week! Where Vice has not annihilated sensibility, there is little need of a Hell! On Sunday night I packed up a few things, went off in the mail, staid about a week in a strange way, still looking forward with a kind of recklessness to the *dernier ressort* of misery—an accident of a very singular kind prevented me, and led me to adopt my

present situation—where what I have suffered—but enough, may he, who in mercy disperiseth anguish be gracious to me.

1794 *Ulcera possessis alte suffusa medul'is Non levioꝛe manu, ferro sanantur et igni. Ne noccat frustra mox eruptura cicatrix. Ad vivum penetrant flammæ, quo fuditur humor. Defluat, et vacuis corrupto sanguine venis Exundet fons ille mali—*
Claud. [xx. 13.]

I received a letter from Tiverton on Thursday full of wisdom, and tenderness and consolation. I answered it immediately. Let me have the comfort of hearing from you. I will write again to-morrow night.

S. T. C.

15. To The Rev. George Coleridge

Sunday night, March 30, 1794.

" . . . I long ago theoretically and in a less degree experimentally, knew the necessity of faith in order to regulate virtue, nor did I even seriously disbelieve the existence of a future state. In short, my religious creed bore and, perhaps, bears a correspondence with my mind and heart. I had too much vanity to be altogether a Christian, too much tenderness of nature to be utterly an infidel. Fond of the dazzle of wit, fond of subtlety of argument, I could not read without some degree of pleasure the levities of Voltaire or the reasonings of Helvetius; but, tremblingly alive to the feelings of humanity, and susceptible to the charms of truth, my heart forced me to admire the "beauty of holiness" in the Gospel, forced me to love the Jesus, whom my reason (or perhaps my reasonings) would not permit me to worship,—my faith, therefore, was made up of the Evangelists and the deistic philosophy—a kind of *religious twilight*. I said, "*perhaps bears*,"—yes! my brother,

for who can say, "*Now* I'll be a Christian"? Faith is neither altogether voluntary; we cannot believe what we choose, but we can certainly cultivate such habits of thinking and acting as will give force and effective energy to the arguments on either side . . . 1794

16. To The Rev. George Coleridge

May 1, 1794.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have been convened before the fellows. Dr. Pearce behaved with great asperity, Mr. Plampin with exceeding and most delicate kindness. My sentence is a reprimand (not a public one, but *imputed* in the sentence), a month's confinement to the precincts of the College, and to translate the works of Demetrius Phalareus into English. It is a thin quarto of about ninety Greek pages. All the fellows tried to persuade the Master to greater leniency, but in vain. Without the least affectation I applaud his conduct, and think nothing of it. The confinement is nothing. I have the fields and grove of the College to walk in, and what can I wish more? What do I wish more? Nothing. The Demetrius is dry, and utterly untransferable to *modern* use, and yet from the Doctor's words I suspect that he wishes it to be a publication, as he has more than once sent to know how I go on, and pressed me to exert erudition in some notes, and to write a preface. Besides this, I have had a declamation to write in the routine of college business, and the Rustat examination, at which I got credit. I get up every morning at five o'clock.

Every one of my acquaintance I have, dropped solemnly and forever, except those of my College with whom before my departure I had been least of all connected—who had always remonstrated against my imprudences, yet have treated me with

almost fraternal affection, Mr. Caldwell particularly. I thought the most *decent* way of dropping acquaintances was to express
1794 my intention, openly and irrevocably.

I find I must either go out at a by-term or degrade to the Christmas after next; but more of this to-morrow. I have been engaged in finishing a Greek ode. I mean to write for all the prizes. I have had no time upon my hands. I shall aim at correctness and perspicuity, not *genius*. My last ode was so *sublime* that nobody could understand it. *If* I should be so *very lucky* as to win one of the prizes, I could *comfortably* ask the Doctor advice concerning the *time* of my degree. I will write to-morrow.

God bless you, my brother! my father!

S. T. COLERIDGE.

17. To Robert Southey

Coleridge visited Oxford in June, 1794, and there he met Southey for the first time.

Cinquester, Sunday morning, July 6, 1794.

S. T. Coleridge to R. Southey, Health and Republicanism to be! When you write, direct to me, "To be kept at the Post Office, Wrexham, Denbighshire, N. Wales." I mention this circumstance *now*, lest carried away by a flood of confluent ideas I should forget it. You are averse to gratitudinarian flourishes, else would I talk about hospitality, attention, etc. However, as I must not thank you, I will thank my stars. Verily, Southey, I like not Oxford nor the inhabitants of it. I would say, thou art a nightingale among owls, but thou art so songless and heavy towards night that I will rather liken thee to the martin hawk. Thy *nest* is in a blighted cornfield, where the sleepy poppy nods its red-cowled head, and the weak-eyed

mole plies his dark work; but thy soaring is even unto heaven. Or let me add (for my appetite for similes is truly canine at this moment) that as the Italian nobles their new-fashioned doors, 1794 so thou dost make the adamant gate of democracy turn on its golden hinges to most sweet music. Our journeying has been intolerably fatiguing from the heat and whiteness of the roads, and the *unhedged* country presents nothing but *stone* fences, dreary to the eye and scorching to the touch. But we shall soon be in Wales.

Gloucester is a nothing-to-be-said-about town. The women have almost all of them sharp noses.

★ ★ ★

It is *wrong*, Southey! for a little girl with a half-famished sickly baby in her arms to put her head in at the window of an inn—"Play, give me a bit of bread and meat!" from a party dining on lamb, green peas, and salad. Why? Because it is *impertinent* and *obtrusive*! "I am a gentleman! and wherefore the clamorous voice of woe intrude upon mine ear?" My companion is a man of cultivated, though not vigorous understanding; his feelings are all on the side of humanity; yet such are the unfeeling remarks, which the lingering remains of aristocracy occasionally prompt. When the pure system of pantisocracy shall have *aspheterized*—from *ἀ*, non, and *στέρος*, proprius (we really *wanted* such a word), instead of travelling along the circuitous, dusty, beaten highroad of diction, you thus cut across the soft, green, pathless field of novelty! Similes for ever! Hurrah! I have bought a little blank book, and portable ink horn; [and] as I journey onward, I ever and anon pluck the wild flowers of poesy, "inhale their odours awhile," then throw them away and think no more of them. I will not do so! Two lines of mine:—

*And o'er the sky's unclouded blue
The sultry heat suffus'd a bra hue.*

1794 The cockatrice is a foul dragon with a *crown* on its head. The Eastern nations believe it to be hatched by a viper on a cock's egg. Southey, dost thou not see wisdom in her *Coan* vest of allegory? The cockatrice is emblematic of monarchy, a *monster* generated by *ingratitude* or *absurdity*. When serpents *sting*, the only remedy is to kill the *serpent*, and *besmear* the wound with the *fat*. Would you desire better sympathy?

Description of heat from a poem I am manufacturing, the title: "Perspiration. A Travelling Eclogue."

*The dust flies smothering, as on clatt'ring wheel
Loath'd aristocracy careers along;
The distant track quick vibrates to the eye,
And white and dazzling undulates with heat,
Where scorching to the unwary travellers' touch,
The stone fence flings its narrow slip of shade;
Or, where the worn sides of the chalky road
Yield their scant excavations (sultry grotts!),
Emblem of languid patience, we behold
The fleecy files faint-ruminating lie.*

Farewell, sturdy Republican! Write me concerning Burnett and thyself, and concerning etc., etc. My next shall be a more sober and chastened epistle; but, you see, I was in the humour for metaphors, and, to tell thee the truth, I have so often serious reasons to quarrel with my inclination, that I do not choose to contradict it for trifles. To Lovell, fraternity and civic remembrances! Hucks' compliments.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Addressed to Robert Southey. Miss Tyler's, Bristol.

18. To, Robert Southey

Wrexham, Sunday, July 15, 1794. 1794

. . . Monday, 11 o'clock. Well, praised be God! here I am. Videlicet, Ruthin, sixteen miles from Wrexham. At Wrexham Church I glanced upon the face of a Miss E. Evans, a young lady, with [whom] I had been in habits of fraternal correspondence. She turned excessively pale, she thought it my ghost, I suppose. I retreated with all possible speed to our inn. There, as I was standing at the window, passed by Eliza Evans, and with her to my utter surprise her sister, Mary Evans, *quam efflictim et perditè amabam*. I apprehend she is come from London on a visit to her grandmother, with whom Eliza lives. I turned sick, and all but fainted away! The two sisters, as H. informs me, passed by the window anxiously several times afterwards; but I had retired.

*Vivit, sed mihi non vivit—nova forte marita,
Ab dolor! alterius carà a cervice pependit.
Vos, malefida valete accensæ insomnia mentis,
Littora amata valete! Vale, ab! formosa Maria!*

My fortitude would not have supported me, had I *recognized* her—I mean *appeared* to do it! I neither ate nor slept yesterday. But love is a local anguish; I am sixteen miles distant, and am not half so miserable. I must endeavour to forget it amid the terrible graces of the wild wood scenery that surround me. I never durst even in a whisper avow my passion, though I knew she loved me. Where were my fortunes? and why should I make her miserable! Almighty God bless her! Her image is in the sanctuary of my heart, and never can it be torn away but with the strings that grapple it to life. Southey! there are few men of whose delicacy I think so highly as to have written all this. I am glad I have so deemed of you. We are soothed by communications.

Denbigh (eight miles from Ruthin).

- And now to give you some little account of our journey.
- 1794 From Oxford to Gloucester, to Ross, to Hereford, to Leominster, to Bishop's Castle, to Welsh Pool, to Llanfyllin, nothing occurred worthy notice except that at the last place I preached pantisocracy and aspheterism with so much success that two great huge fellows of butcher-like appearance danced about the room in enthusiastic agitation. And one of them of his own accord called for a large glass of brandy, and drank it off to this his own toast, "God save the King! And may he be the last." Southey! Such men may be of use. They would kill the golden calf *secundum artem*. From Llanfyllin we penetrated into the interior of the country to Llangunnog, a village most romantically situated. We dined there on hashed mutton, cucumber, bread and cheese, and beer, and had two pots of ale—the sum total of the expense being sixteen pence for both of us! From Llangunnog we walked over the mountains to Bala—most sublimely terrible! It was scorchingly hot. I applied my mouth ever and anon to the side of the rocks and sucked in draughts of water cold as ice, and clear as infant diamonds in their embryo dew! The rugged and stony clefts are stupendous, and in winter must form cataracts most astonishing. At this time of the year there is just water enough dashed down over them to "soothe, not disturb the pensive traveller's ear." I slept by the side of one an hour or more. As we descended the mountain, the sun was reflected in the river, that winded through the valley with insufferable brightness; it rivalled the sky. At Bala is nothing remarkable except a lake of eleven miles in circumference. At the inn I was sore afraid that I had caught the itch from a Welsh democrat, who was charmed with my sentiments: he grasped my hand with flesh-bruising ardor, and I trembled lest some disappointed citizens of the *animalcular* republic should have emigrated . . .
- . . . At Denbigh is a ruined castle; it surpasses everything

I could have conceived. I wandered there an hour and a half last evening (this is Tuesday morning). Two well-dressed young men were walking there. "Come," says one, "I'll play my flute; 't will be romantic." "Bless thee for the thought, man of genius and sensibility!" I exclaimed, and preattuned my heartstring to tremulous emotion. He sat adown (the moon just peering) amid the awful part of the ruins, and the romantic youth struck up the affecting tune of "Mrs. Carey." 'T is fact, upon my honour. 1794

God bless you, Southey! We shall be at Aberystwith this day week. When will you come out to meet us? There you must direct your letter. Hucks' compliments. I anticipate much accession of republicanism from Lovell. I have positively done nothing but dream of the system of no property every step of the way since I left you, till last Sunday. Heighol

Robert Southey, No. 8 Westcott Buildings, Bath.

19. To Robert Southey

Coleridge's early relationship with Southey was based on their common enthusiasm for poetry and for the founding of an ideal colony in South America, a Society to be called Pantisocracy. The moving spirit was at first Southey, and it was Southey who first outgrew this daydream, a fact which Coleridge saw as a betrayal. Coleridge, too, outgrew this last fantasy of childhood, but not before he had involved himself in his marriage with Sara Fricker, who, with her sisters Edith (Mrs. Southey) and Mary (Mrs. Lovell), were to be pantisocratic wives.

London, Monday Morning,

[Postmark September 6, 1794.]

Every night since my arrival I have spent at an Alehouse, by courtesy called a Coffee-house: the "Salutation and Cat"

1794 in Newgate St.—We have a comfortable Room to ourselves, and drink Porter and *Punch* round a good fire. My motive for all this is that every night I meet a most intelligent young man who has spent the last five years of his life in America—and is lately come from thence as an Agent to sell Land. He was of our School—I had been kind to him—he remembered it—and comes regularly every evening to “benefit by conversation” he says. He says two thousand pound will do—that he doubts not we can contract for our Passage under £400—that we shall buy this Land a great deal cheaper when we arrive at America, than we could do in England—or why (adds he) am I sent over here? That twelve men can *easily* clear *three hundred* Acres in 4 or 5 months—and that for six hundred Dollars a thousand Acres may be cleared, and houses built upon them. He recommends the Susquehanna from its excessive Beauty, and its security from hostile Indians—Every possible assistance will be given us. We may get credit for the Land for ten years or more as we settle upon it—That literary characters make *money* there, that etc., etc. He never saw a Byson in his life, but has heard of them. They are quite backwards. The Mosquitos are not so bad as our Gnats—and after you have been there a little while, they don’t trouble you much. He says the Women’s *teeth* are bad there—but not the men’s—at least not nearly so much—attributes it to neglect—to particular foods—is by no means convinced it is the necessary effect of Climate.

20. To Robert Southey

Coleridge's relationship with Sara Fricker, whom he married in 1795, was from the first inauspicious. Southey, engaged to Edith Fricker, was already bringing pressure to bear on his friend to pursue his courtship of Sara with a little more ardour. Coleridge's last

desperate bid for freedom was made when in 1794 he wrote to Mary Evans the letters reproduced on pp. 48 and 51. A letter to Southey written immediately after (p. 50) shows that Coleridge made the most fatal mistake of his life with open eyes. Coleridge's and Southey's undergraduate sense of honour proved so much dust in the final balance of a marriage based upon little else. 1794

Friday morning, September 19, 1794.

My fire was blazing cheerfully—the tea-kettle even now boiled over on it. Now sudden sad it looks. But, see, it blazes up again as cheerily as ever. Such, dear Southey, was the effect of your this morning's letter on my heart. Angry, no! I esteem and confide in you the more; but it *did* make me sorrowful. I was blameless; it was therefore only a passing cloud empictured on the breast. Surely had I written to you the *first* letter you directed to me at Cambridge, I *would* not have believed that you *could* have received it without answering it. Still less that you could have given a momentary pain to her that loved you. If I could have imagined no *rational* excuse for you, I would have peopled the vacancy with events of impossibility!

On Wednesday, September 17, I arrived at Cambridge. Perhaps the very hour you were writing in the severity of offended friendship, was I pouring forth the heart to Sarah Fricker. I did not call on Caldwell; I saw no one. On the moment of my arrival I shut my door, and wrote to her. But why not before?

In the first place Miss F. did not authorize me to direct immediately to her. It was *settled* that through you in our weekly *parcels* were the letters to be conveyed. The moment I arrived at Cambridge, and all yesterday, was I writing letters to you, to your mother, to Lovell, etc., to complete a parcel.

In London I wrote twice to you, intending daily to go to Cambridge; of course I deferred the parcel till then. I was taken ill, very ill. I exhausted my finances, and ill as I was, I sat

1794 down and scrawled a 'few guineas' worth of nonsense for the booksellers, which Dyer disposed of for me. Languid, sick at heart, in the back room of an inn! Lofty conjunction of circumstances for me to write to Miss F. Besides, I told her I should write the moment I arrived at Cambridge. I have fulfilled the promise. Recollect, Southey, that when you mean to go to a place to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, the time that intervenes is lost. Had I meant at first to stay in London, a fortnight should not have elapsed without my writing to her. If you are satisfied, tell Miss F. that *you* are *so*, but assign no reasons—I ought not to have been suspected.

21. To Robert Southey

October 21, 1794.

. . . No name was signed,—it was from Mary Evans. I received it about three weeks ago. I loved her, Southey, almost to madness. Her image was never absent from me for three years, for *more* than three years. My resolution has not faltered, but I want a comforter. I have done nothing, I have gone into company, I was constantly at the theatre here till they left us, I endeavoured to be perpetually with Miss Brunton, I even hoped that her exquisite beauty and uncommon accomplishments might have cured one passion by another. The latter I could easily have dissipated in her absence, and so have restored my affections to her whom I do not love, but whom by every tie of reason and honour I ought to love. I am resolved, but wretched! But time shall do much. You found it no easy task to write to——. I should have detested myself, if after my first letter I had written coldly—how could I write *as warmly*? I was vexed too and alarmed by your letter concerning Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, Shad, and little

Sally. I was wrong, very wrong, in the affair of Shad, and have given you reason to suppose that I should assent to the innovation. I will most assuredly go with you to America, on this plan, but, remember, Southey, this is *not our plan*, nor can I defend it. "Shad's children will be educated as ours, and the education we shall give them will be such as to render them incapable of blushing at the want of it in their parents"—*Perhaps!* With this one word would every Lilliputian reasoner demolish the system. Wherever men *can* be vicious, some *will* be. The leading idea of pantisocracy is to make men *necessarily* virtuous by removing all motives to evil—all possible temptation. "Let them dine with us and be treated with as much equality as they would wish, but perform that part of labour for which their education has fitted them." *Southey* should not have written this sentence. My friend, my noble and high-souled friend should have said to his dependents, "Be my slaves, and ye shall be my equals," to his wife and sister, "Resign the *name* of Ladyship and ye shall retain the *thing*." Again. Is every family to possess one of these unequal equals, these Helot Egalites? Or are the few who have mentioned, "with more toil than the peasantry of England undergo," to do for all of us 'that part of labour which their education has fitted them for'? If your remarks on the other side are just, the inference is that the scheme of pantisocracy is impracticable, but I hope and believe that it is not a *necessary* inference. Your remark of the physical evil in the long infancy of men would indeed puzzle a Pangloss—puzzle him to account for the wish of a benevolent heart like yours to discover malignancy in its Creator. Surely every eye but an eye jaundiced by habit of peevish scepticism must have seen that the mother's cares are repaid even to rapture by the mother's endearments, and that the long helplessness of the babe is the *means* of our superiority in the filial and maternal affection and duties to the same feelings in the brute creation. It is likewise among other causes the

means of society, that thing which makes them a little lower than the angels. If Mrs. S. and Mrs. F. go with us, they can at least prepare the food of simplicity for us. Let the married women do only what is absolutely convenient and customary for pregnant women or nurses. Let the husband do all the rest, and what will that all be? Washing with a machine and cleaning the house. One hour's addition to our daily labor, and *pantisocracy* in its most perfect sense is practicable. That the greater part of our female companions should have the task of maternal exertion at the same time is very *improbable*; but, though it were to happen, an infant is almost always sleeping, and during its slumbers, the mother may in the same room perform the little offices of ironing clothes or making shirts. But the hearts of the women are not *all* with us. I do believe that Edith and Sarah are exceptions, but do even they know the bill of fare for the day, every duty that will be incumbent upon them?

All necessary knowledge in the branch of ethics is comprised in the word justice: that the good of the whole is the good of each individual, that, of course, it is each individual's *duty* to be just, *because* it is his *interest*. To perceive this and to assent to it as an abstract proposition is easy, but it requires the most wakeful attentions of the most reflective mind in all moments to bring it into practice. It is not enough that we have once swallowed it. The *heart* should have *fed* upon the *truth*, as insects on a leaf, till it be tinged with the colour, and show its food in every the minutest fibre. In the book of pantisocracy I hope to have comprised all that is good in Godwin, of whom and of whose book I will write more fully in my next letter (I think not so highly of him as you do, and I have read him with the greatest attention). This will be an advantage to the *minds* of our women.

22. To Robert Southey

Autumn, 1794. 1794

Last night, dear Southey, I received a special invitation from Dr. Edwards (the great Grecian of Cambridge and heterodox divine) to drink tea and spend the evening. I there met a councillor whose name is Lushington, a democrat, and a man of the most powerful and Briarcan intellect. I was challenged on the subject of pantisocracy, which is, indeed, the universal topic at the University. A discussion began and continued for six hours. In conclusion, Lushington and Edwards declared the system impregnable, supposing the assigned quantum of virtue and genius in the first individuals. I came home at one o'clock this morning in the honest consciousness of having exhibited clever argument in more elegant and appropriate language than I had ever conceived myself capable of. Then my heart smote me, for I saw your letter on the propriety of taking servants with us. I had answered that letter, and feel conviction that you will *perceive* the error into which the tenderness of your nature had led you. But other queries obtruded themselves on my understanding. The more perfect our system is, supposing the necessary premises, the more eager in anxiety am I that the necessary premises exist. O for that Lyncan eye that can discover in the acorn of Error the rooted and widely spreading oak of Misery! Quære: should not all who mean to become members of our community be incessantly meliorating their temper and elevating their understandings? Qu.: whether a very respectable quantity of *acquired* knowledge (History, Politics, above all, *Metaphysics*, without which no man *can* reason but with women and children) be not a prerequisite to the improvement of the head and heart? Qu.: whether our Women have not been taught by us habitually to contemplate the littleness of individual comforts and a passion for the

novelty of the scheme rather than a generous enthusiasm of Benevolence? Are they saturated with the Divinity of Truth sufficiently to be always wakeful? In the present state of their minds, whether it is not probable that the *Mothers* will tinge the minds of the infants with prejudication? The questions are meant merely as motives to you, Southey, to the strengthening the minds of the Women, and stimulating them to literary acquirements. But, Southey, there are *Children* going with us. Why did I never dare in my disputations with the unconvinced to hint at this circumstance? Was it not because I knew, even to certainty of conviction, that it is subversive of *rational* hopes of a permanent system? These children,—the little Frickers, for instance, and your brothers,—are they not already deeply tinged with the prejudices and errors of society? Have they not learned from their schoolfellows *Fear* and *Selfishness*, of which the necessary offsprings are Deceit and desultory Hatred? How are we to prevent them from infecting the minds of *our* children? By re-forming their judgments? At so early an age, *can* they have *felt* the ill consequences of their errors in a manner sufficiently vivid to make this reformation practicable? How can we insure their silence concerning God, etc.? Is it possible *they* should enter into our *motives* for this silence? If not, we must produce their *Obedience* by *Terror*. *Obedience? 'Terror?* The repetition is sufficient. I need not inform you that they are as inadequate as inapplicable. I have told you, Southey, that I will accompany you on an *imperfect* system. But must our system be thus necessarily imperfect? I ask the question that I may know whether or not I should write the Book of Pantisocracy.

I received your letter of Oyez; it brought a smile on a countenance that for these three weeks has been cloudy and stern in its solitary hours. In company, wit and laughter are Duties. Slovenly? I could mention a lady of fashionable rank, and most fashionable ideas, who declared to Caldwell that I (S. T.

Coleridge) was a man of the most *courtly* and polished manners, of the most *gentlemanly* address she had ever met with. But I will not *crow*! Slovenly, indeed!

1794

23. To The Rev. George Coleridge

Thursday, November 6, 1794.

. . . Solemnly, my brother, I tell you, I am *not* a democrat. I see, evidently, that the present is *not* the highest state of society of which we are *capable*. And after a diligent, I may say an intense, study of Locke, Hartley, and others who have written most wisely on the nature of man, I appear to myself to see the *point* of possible perfection, at which the world may perhaps be destined to arrive. But how to lead mankind from one point to the other is a process of such infinite complexity, that in deep-felt humility I resign it to that Being "Who shaketh the Earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble," "Who purifieth with Whirlwinds, and makest the Pestilence his Besom," Who hath said, "that violence shall no more be heard of; the people shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat"; "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together." I have been asked what is the best conceivable mode of meliorating society. My answer has been this: "Slavery is an abomination to my feeling of the head and the heart. Did Jesus teach the *abolition* of it? No! He taught those principles of which the necessary *effect* was to abolish all slavery. He prepared the *mind* for the reception before he poured the blessing." You ask me what the friend of universal equality should do. I answer: "Talk not politics. *Preach the Gospel!*"

24. To Mary Evans

1794

(?) December, 1794.

Too long has my heart been the torture house of suspense. After infinite struggles of irresolution, I will at last dare to request of you, Mary, that you will communicate to me whether or no you are engaged to Mr. —. I conjure you not to consider this request as presumptuous indelicacy. Upon mine honour, I have made it with no other design or expectation than that of arming my fortitude by total hopelessness. Read this letter with benevolence—and consign it to oblivion.

For four years I have *endeavoured* to smother a very ardent attachment; in what degree I have succeeded you must know better than I can. With quick perceptions of moral beauty, it was impossible for me not to admire in you your sensibility regulated by judgment, your gaiety proceeding from a cheerful heart acting on the stores of a strong understanding. At first I voluntarily invited the recollection of these qualities into my mind. I made them the perpetual object of my reveries, yet I entertained no one sentiment beyond that of the immediate pleasure annexed to the thinking of you. At length it became a habit. I awoke from the delusion, and found that I had unwittingly harboured a passion which I felt neither the power nor the courage to subdue. My associations were irrevocably formed, and your image was blended with every idea. I thought of you incessantly; yet the spirit (if spirit there be that condescends to record the lonely beatings of my heart), that spirit knows that I thought of you with the purity of a brother. Happy were I, had it been with no more than a brother's ardour!

The man of dependent fortunes, while he fosters an attachment, commits an act of suicide on his happiness. I possessed no establishment. My views were very distant; I saw that you regarded me merely with the kindness of a sister. What

expectations could I form? I formed no expectations. I was ever resolving to subdue the disquieting passion; still some inexplicable suggestion palsied my efforts, and I clung with desperate fondness to this phantom of love, its mysterious attractions and hopeless prospects. It was a faint and rayless hope! Yet it soothed my solitude with many a delightful day-dream. It was a faint and rayless hope! Yet I nursed it in my bosom with an agony of affection, even as a mother her sickly infant. But these are the poisoned luxuries of a diseased fancy. Indulge, Mary, this my first, my last request, and restore me to *reality*, however gloomy. Sad and full of heaviness will the intelligence be; my heart will die within me. I shall, however, receive it with steadier resignation from yourself, than were it announced to me (haply on your marriage day!) by a stranger. Indulge my request; I will not disturb your peace by even a *look* of discontent. still less will I offend your ear by the whine of selfish sensibility. In a few months I shall enter at the Temple and there seek forgetful calmness, where only it can be found, in incessant and useful activity.

Were you not possessed of a mind and of a heart above the usual lot of women, I should not have written you sentiments that would be unintelligible to three fourths of your sex. But our feelings are congenial, though our attachment is doomed not to be reciprocal. You will not deem so meanly of me as to believe that I shall regard Mr. — with the jaundiced eye of disappointed passion. God forbid! He whom you honour with your affections becomes sacred to me. I shall love him for *your* sake; the time may perhaps come when I shall be philosopher enough not to envy him for *his own*.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

I return to Cambridge to-morrow morning.

Miss Evans, No. 17 Sackville Street, Piccadilly.

25. To Robert Southey

1794

December, 1794.

I am calm, dear Southey! as an autumnal day, when the sky is covered with gray moveless clouds. To *love her*, habit has made unalterable. I had placed her in the sanctuary of my heart, nor can she be torn from thence but with the strings that grapple it to life. This passion, however, divested as it now is of all shadow of hope, seems to lose its disquieting power. Far distant, and never more to behold or hear of her, I shall sojourn in the vale of men, sad and in loneliness, yet not unhappy. He cannot be long wretched who dares be actively virtuous. I am well assured that she loves me as a favourite brother. When she was present, she was to me only as a very dear sister; it was in absence that I felt those gnawings of suspense, and that dreaminess of mind, which evidence an affection more restless, yet scarcely less pure than the fraternal. The struggle has been well nigh too much for me; but, praised be the All-Merciful! the feebleness of exhausted feelings has produced a calm, and my heart stagnates into peace.

Southey! my ideal standard of female excellence rises not above that woman. But all things work together for good. Had I been united to her, the excess of my affection would have effeminized my intellect. I should have fed on her looks as she entered into the room, I should have gazed on her footsteps when she went out from me.

To lose her! I can rise above that selfish pang. But to marry another. O Southey! bear with my weakness. Love makes all things pure and heavenly like itself,—but to marry a woman whom I do *not* love, to degrade her whom I call my wife by making her the instrument of low desire, and on the removal of a desultory appetite to be perhaps not displeased with her absence! Enough! These refinements are the wildering fires that lead me into vice. Mark you, Southey! *I will do my duty*. . .

26. To Mary Evans

December 24, 1794. 1794

I have this moment received your letter, Mary Evans. Its firmness does honour to your understanding, its gentleness to your humanity. You condescend to accuse yourself—most unjustly! You have been altogether blameless. In my wildest day-dream of vanity, I never supposed that you entertained for me any other than a common friendship.

To love you, habit has made unalterable. This passion, however, divested as it now is of all shadow of hope, will lose its disquieting power. Far distant from you I shall journey through the vale of men in calmness. He cannot long be wretched, who dares be actively virtuous.

I have burnt your letters—forget mine; and that I have pained you forgive me!

May God infinitely love you!

S. T. COLERIDGE.

27. To Robert Southey

Friday morning, November 13, 1795.

Southey, I *have* lost friends—friends who still cherish for me sentiments of high esteem and unextinguished tenderness. For the sum total of my misbehaviour, the Alpha and Omega of their accusations, is epistolary neglect. I never speak of them without affection, I never think of them without reverence. Not “to this catalogue,” Southey, have “I added *your* name.” You are *lost* to *me*, because you are lost to Virtue. As this will probably be the last time I shall have occasion to address you, I will begin at the beginning and regularly retrace your conduct and my own. In the month of June, 1794, I first became acquainted with your person and character. Before I quitted

1795 Oxford, we had struck out the leading features of a pantisocracy. While on my journey through Wales you invited me to Bristol with the full hopes of realising it. During my abode at Bristol the plan was matured, and I returned to Cambridge hot in the anticipation of that happy season when we should remove the *selfish* principle from ourselves, and prevent it in our children, by an abolition of property; or, in whatever respects this might be impracticable, by such similarity of property as would amount to a *moral* sameness, and answer all the purposes of *abolition*. Nor were you less zealous, and thought and expressed your opinion, that if any man embraced our system he must comparatively disregard "his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, or he could not be our disciple." In one of your letters, alluding to your mother's low spirits and situation, you tell me that "I cannot suppose any *individual* feelings will have an undue weight with you," and in the same letter you observe (alas! your recent conduct has made it a prophecy!), "God forbid that the *ebullience* of *schematism* should be over. It is the Promethean fire that animates my soul, and when *that* is gone *all will be darkness*. I have *devoted* myself!"

Previously to my departure from Jesus College, and during my melancholy detention in London, what convulsive struggles of feeling I underwent, and what sacrifices I made, you know. The liberal proposal from my family affected me no further than as it pained me to wound a revered brother by the positive and immediate refusal which duty compelled me to return. But there was a—I need not be particular; you remember what a fetter I burst, and that it snapt as if it had been a sinew of my heart. However, I returned to Bristol, and my addresses to Sara, which I at first paid from principle, not feeling, from feeling and from principle I renewed; and I met a reward more than proportionate to the greatness of the effort. I love and I am beloved, and I am happy!

Your letter to Lovell (two or three days after my arrival at Bristol), in answer to some objections of mine to the Welsh scheme, was the first thing that alarmed me. Instead of "It is our duty," "Such and such are the reasons," it was "I and I" and "will and will,"—sentences of gloomy and self-centering resolve. I wrote you a friendly reproof, and in my own mind attributed this unwonted style to your earnest desires of realising our plan, and the angry pain which you felt when any appeared to oppose or defer its execution. However, I came over to your opinions of the utility, and, in course, the duty of rehearsing our scheme in Wales, and so, rejected the offer of being established in the Earl of Buchan's family. To this period of our connection I call your more particular attention and remembrance, as I shall revert to it at the close of my letter. 1795

We commenced lecturing. Shortly after, you began to recede in your conversation from those broad principles in which pantisocracy originated. I opposed you with vehemence, for I well knew that no notion of morality or its motives could be without consequences. And once (it was just before we went to bed) you confessed to me that you had acted wrong. But you relapsed, your manner became cold and gloomy, and pleaded with increased pertinacity for the wisdom of making Self an undiverging Center. At Mr. Jardine's your language was *strong indeed*. Recollect it. You had left the table, and we were standing at the window. Then darted into my mind the dread that you were meditating a separation. At *Chepston* your conduct renewed my suspicion, and I was greatly agitated, even to many tears. But in Peircefield Walks you assured me that my suspicions were altogether unfounded, that our differences were merely speculative, and that you would certainly go into Wales. I was glad and satisfied. For my heart was never bent from you but by violent strength, and heaven knows how it leapt back to esteem and love you. But alas! a

1795 short time passed ere your departure from our first principles became too flagrant. Remember when we went to Ashton on the strawberry party. Your conversation with George Burnett on the day following he detailed to me. It scorched my throat. Your private resources were to remain your individual property, and everything to be separate except a farm of five or six acres. In short, we were to commence partners in a petty farming trade. This was the mouse of which the mountain Pantisocracy was at last safely delivered . . .

Then with good reason I considered you as one *fallen back into the ranks*: as a man admirable for his abilities only, strict, indeed, in the lesser honesties, but, like the majority of men, unable to resist a strong temptation. *Friend* is a very sacred appellation. You were become an *acquaintance*, yet one for whom I felt no common tenderness. I could not forget what you had been. Your sun was set; your sky was clouded; but those clouds and that sky were yet tinged with the recent sun. As I considered you, so I treated you. I studiously avoided all particular subjects. I acquainted you with nothing relative to myself. Literary topics engrossed our conversation. You were too quick-sighted not to perceive it. I received a letter from you. "You have withdrawn your confidence from me, Coleridge. Preserving still the face of friendship when we meet, you yet avoid me and carry on your plans in secrecy." If by "the face of friendship" you meant that kindness which I show to all because I feel it for all, your statement was perfectly accurate. If you meant more, you contradict yourself; for you evidently perceived from my manners that you were a "weight upon me" in company—an intruder, unwished and unwelcome. I pained you by "cold civility, the shadow which friendship leaves behind him." Since that letter I altered my conduct no otherwise than by avoiding you more. I still generalised, and spoke not of myself, except my proposed literary works. In short, I spoke to you as I should have done

to any other man of genius who had happened to be my acquaintance. Without the farce and tumult of a rupture I wished you to sink into that class. "Face to face you never changed your manners to me." And yet I pained you by "cold civility." Egregious contradiction! Doubtless I always treated you with urbanity, and meant to do so; but I *locked up* my heart from you, and you perceived it, and I intended you to perceive it. "I planned works in conjunction with you." Most certainly; the *magazine* which, long before this, you had planned equally with me, and, if it had been carried into execution, would of course have returned you a third share of the profits. What had you done that should make you an unfit literary associate to me? Nothing. My opinion of you as a man was altered, not as a writer. Our Muses had not quarrelled. I should have read your poetry with equal delight, and corrected it with equal zeal if correction it needed. "I received you on my return from Shurton with my usual shake of the hand." You gave me your hand, and dreadful must have been my feelings if I had refused to take it. Indeed, so long had I known you, so highly venerated, so dearly loved you, that my hand would have taken yours *mechanically*. But is shaking the hand a mark of *friendship*? Heaven forbid! I should then be a hypocrite many days in the week. It is assuredly the pledge of acquaintance, and nothing more. But after this did I not with most scrupulous care avoid you? You know I did.

In your former letters you say that I made use of these words to you: "You will be retrograde that you may spring the farther forward." You have misquoted, Southey! You had talked of rejoining pantisocracy in about fourteen years. I exploded this probability, but as I saw you determined to leave it, hoped and wished it might be so—*hoped* that we might run backwards only to leap forward. Not to mention that during that conversation I had taken the weight and pressing urgency of your motives as truths granted; but when, on

1795 examination, I found them a show and mockery of unreal things, doubtless, my opinion of you *must* have become far less respectful. You quoted likewise the last sentence of my letter to you, as a proof that I approved of your design; you *knew* that sentence to imply no more than the pious confidence of optimism—however wickedly you might act, God would make it *ultimately* the best. You *knew* this was the meaning of it—I could find twenty parallel passages in the lectures. Indeed, such expressions applied to bad actions had become a habit of my conversation. You had named, not unwittingly, Dr. Pangloss. And Heaven forbid that I should not now have faith that however foul your stream may run here, yet that it will filtrate and become pure in its subterraneous passage to the Ocean of Universal Redemption.

Thus far had I written when the necessities of literary occupation crowded upon me, and I met you in Redcliff, and, unsaluted and unsaluting, passed by the man to whom for almost a year I had told my last thoughts when I closed my eyes, and the first when I awoke. But “ere this I have felt sorrow!” . . .

28. To Josiah Wade

Nottingham, Wednesday morning, January 27, 1796.

. . . Derby is full of curiosities, the cotton, the silk mills, Wright, the painter, and Dr. Darwin,* the everything, except the Christian! Dr. Darwin possesses, perhaps, a greater range of knowledge than any other man in Europe, and is the most

*Dr. Erasmus Darwin, 1731-1802, grandfather of Charles Darwin naturalist and poet, author of *The Loves of the Plants*, *The Botanic Gardens*, etc., as well as *Zoonomia, or the Laws of Organic Life* and other scientific works. Hutton's *Theory of the Earth* was published in 1795.

inventive of philosophical men. He thinks in a *new* train on all subjects except religion. He bantered me on the subject of religion. I heard all his arguments, and told him that it was infinitely consoling to me, to find that the arguments which so great a man adduced against the existence of a God and the evidences of revealed religion were such as had startled me at fifteen, but had become the objects of my smile at twenty. Not one new objection—not even an ingenious one. He boasted that he had never read one book in defence of *such stuff*, but he had read all the works of infidels! What should you think, Mr. Wade, of a man, who, having abused and ridiculed you, should openly declare that he had heard all that your *enemies* had to say against you, but had scorned to enquire the truth from any of your own friends? Would you think him an honest man? I am sure you would not. Yet of such are all the infidels with whom I have met. They talk of a subject infinitely important, yet are proud to confess themselves profoundly ignorant of it. Dr. Darwin would have been ashamed to have rejected Hutton's theory of the earth without having minutely examined it; yet what is it to us *how* the earth was made, a thing impossible to be known, and useless if known? This system the doctor did not reject without having severely studied it; but *all at once he makes up his mind* on such important subjects, as whether we be the outcasts of a blind idiot called Nature, or the children of an all-wise and infinitely good God; whether we spend a few miserable years on this earth, and then sink into a clod of the valley, or only endure the anxieties of mortal life in order to fit us for the enjoyment of immortal happiness. These subjects are unworthy a philosopher's investigation. He deems that there is a certain *self-evidence* in infidelity, and becomes an atheist by intuition . . . •

1796

29. To Joseph Cottle

1796 *Joseph Cottle, 1770–1853, a Bristol Bookseller, Publisher and would-be poet, undertook to pay Coleridge at a fixed rate for any poetry he wrote. He published several of the early works of Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth, and is the author of Early Recollections, chiefly relating to Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1837). He published Early Recollections of Coleridge and Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey.*

Redcliff Hill, February 22, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is my duty and business to thank God for all his dispensations, and to believe them the best possible; but, indeed, I think I should have been more thankful, if he had made me a journeyman shoemaker, instead of an author by trade. I have left my friends; I have left plenty; I have left that ease which would have secured a literary immortality, and have enabled me to give the public works conceived in moments of inspiration, and polished with leisurely solicitude; and alas! for what have I left them? for — who deserted me in the hour of distress, and for a scheme of virtue impracticable and romantic! So I am forced to write for bread; write the flights of poetic enthusiasm, when every minute I am hearing a groan from my wife. Groans, and complaints, and sickness! The present hour I am in a quick-set hedge of embarrassment, and whichever way I turn a thorn runs into me! The future is cloud and thick darkness! Poverty, perhaps, and the thin faces of them that want bread, looking up to me! Nor is this all. My happiest moments for composition are broken in upon by the reflection that I must make haste. I am too late! I am already months behind! I have received my pay beforehand! Oh, wayward and desultory spirit of genius! Ill canst thou brook a taskmaster! The tenderest touch from the hand of obligation wounds thee like a scourge of scorpions.

I have been composing in the fields this morning, and came

home to write down the first rude sheet of my preface, when I heard that your man had brought a note from you. I have not seen it, but I guess its contents. I am writing as fast as I can. 1796 Depend on it you shall not be out of pocket for me! I feel what I owe you, and independently of this I love you as a friend; indeed, so much, that I regret, seriously regret, that you have been my copyholder.

If I have written petulantly, forgive me. God knows I am sore all over. God bless you, and believe me that, setting gratitude aside, I love and esteem you, and have your interest at heart full as much as my own.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

30. To John Thelwall

May 13, 1796.

. . . I was once and only once in company with Godwin. He appeared to me to possess neither the strength of intellect that discovers truth, nor the powers of imagination that decorate falsehood; he talked soporisms in jejune language. I like Holcroft a thousand times better, and think him a man of much greater ability. Fierce, hot, petulant, the very high priest of atheism, he hates God "with all his heart, with all his mind, with all his soul, and with all his strength." Every man not an atheist is only not a fool. "Dr. Priestley? there is a *petitesse* in his mind. Martley? pshaw! Godwin, sir, is a thousand times a better metaphysician!" But this intolerance is founded on benevolence. (I had almost forgotten that horrible story about his son.)

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. . . Your remarks on my poems are, I think, just in general; there is a rage and affectation of double epithets. "Unshuddered, unaghasted" is, indeed, *truly* ridiculous. But why so

violent against *metaphysics* in poetry? Is not Akenside's a metaphysical poem? Perhaps you do not like Akenside? Well, but *I do*, and so do a great many others. Why pass an act of *uniformity* against poets? I received a letter from a very sensible friend abusing love verses; another blaming the introduction of politics, "as wider from true poetry than the equator from the poles." "Some for each" is my motto. That poetry pleases which interests. My religious poetry interests the *religious*, who read it with rapture. Why? Because it awakes in them all the associations connected with a love of future existence, etc. A very dear friend of mine, who is, in my opinion, the best poet of the age (I will send you his poem when published), thinks that the lines from 364 to 375 and from 403 to 428 the best in the volume,—indeed, worth all the rest. And this man is a republican, and, at least, a *semi*-atheist. Why do you object to "shadowy of truth"? It is, I acknowledge, a Grecism, but, I think, an elegant one. Your remarks on the della-crusca place of emphasis are just in part. Where we wish to point out the *thing*, and the *quality* is mentioned merely as a decoration, this mode of emphasis is indeed absurd; therefore, I very patiently give up to critical vengeance "*high tree*," "*sore wounds*," and "*rough rock*"; but when you wish to dwell chiefly on the *quality* rather than the *thing*, then this mode is proper, and, indeed, is used in common conversation. Who says good *man*? Therefore, "*big soul*," "*cold earth*," "*dark womb*," and "*flamy child*" are all right, and introduce a variety into the versification, [which is] an advantage where you can attain it without any sacrifice of sense. As to harmony, it is all *association*. Milton is *harmonious* to me, and I absolutely nauseate Darwin's poems.

Yours affectionately,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

John Thelwall,

Beaufort Buildings, Strand, London.

31. To Thomas Poole

Saturday, September 24, 1796. 1796

. . . On Tuesday morning I was surprised by a letter from Mr. Maurice, our medical attendant, informing me that Mrs. Coleridge was delivered on Monday, September 19, 1796, half past two in the morning, of a SON, and that both she and the child were uncommonly well. I was quite annihilated with the suddenness of the information, and retired to my own room to address myself to my Maker, but I could only offer up to Him the silence of stupefied feelings. I hastened home, and Charles Lloyd returned with me. When I first saw the child, I did not feel that thrill and overflowing of affection which I expected. I looked on it with a melancholy gaze; my mind was intensely contemplative and my heart only sad. But when two hours after I . . . it at the bosom of its mother, on her arm, and her eye tearful and watching its little features, then I was thrilled and melted, and gave it the KISS of a *father* . . . The baby seems strong, and the old nurse has over-persuaded my wife to discover a likeness of me in its face—no great compliment to me, for, in truth, I have seen handsomer babies in my lifetime. Its name is David Hartley Coleridge. I hope that ere he be a man, if God destines him for continuance in this life, his head will be convinced of, and his heart saturated with, the truths so ably supported by that great master of *Christian* Philosophy . . .

32. To Charles Lamb

1796

This letter was written in answer to a request from Charles Lamb, who in writing to his old school friend of the 'terrible calamities' that had just befallen him, asked Coleridge to write 'as religious a letter as possible.'

[September 28, 1796.]

Your letter, my friend, struck me with a mighty horror. It rushed upon me and stupefied my feelings. You bid me write you a religious letter. I am not a man who would attempt to insult the greatness of your anguish by any other consolation. Heaven knows that in the easiest fortunes there is much dissatisfaction and weariness of spirit; much that calls for the exercise of patience and resignation; but in storms like these, that shake the dwelling and make the heart tremble, there is no middle way between despair and the yielding up of the whole spirit into the guidance of faith. And surely it is a matter of joy that your faith in Jesus has been preserved; the Comforter that should relieve you is not far from you. But as you are a Christian, in the name of that Saviour, who was filled with bitterness and made drunken with wormwood, I conjure you to have recourse in frequent prayer to "his God and your God"; the God of mercies, and father of all comfort. Your poor father is, I hope, almost senseless of the calamity; the unconscious instrument of Divine Providence knows it not, and your mother is in heaven. It is sweet to be roused from a frightful dream by the song of birds and the gladsome rays of the morning. Ah, how infinitely more sweet to be awakened from the blackness and amazement of a sudden horror by the glories of God manifest and the hallelujahs of angels.

As to what regards yourself, I approve altogether of your abandoning what you justly call vanities. I look upon you as a man called by sorrow and anguish and a strange desolation of hopes into quietness, and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God! We cannot arrive at any portion of heavenly bliss

without in some measure imitating Christ; and they arrive at the largest inheritance who imitate the most difficult parts of his character, and, bowed down and crushed underfoot, cry in fulness of faith, "Father, thy will be done." 1796

I wish above measure to have you for a little while here; no visitants shall blow on the nakedness of your feelings; you shall be quiet, and your spirit may be healed. I see no possible objection, unless your father's helplessness prevent you, and unless you are necessary to him. If this be not the case, I charge you write me that you will come.

I charge you, my dearest friend, not to dare to encourage gloom or despair. You are a temporary sharer in human miseries that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine nature. I charge you, if by any means it be possible, come to me.

I remain your affectionate

S. T. COLERIDGE.

33. To Thomas Poole

Saturday night, November 5, 1796.

. . . I wanted such a letter as yours, for I am very unwell. On Wednesday night I was seized with an intolerable pain from my right eye, cheek, jaw, and that side of the throat. I was nearly frantic, and ran about the house naked, endeavouring by every means to excite sensations in different parts of my body, and so to weaken the enemy by creating division. It continued from one in the morning till half past five, and left me pale and fainting. It came on fitfully, but not so violently, several times on Thursday, and began severer threats towards night; but I took between sixty and seventy drops of laudanum, and *sopped* the Cerberus, just as his mouth began to open. On Friday it only *niggled*, as if the chief had departed from a conquered place, and merely left a small garrison behind, or as if

he had evacuated the Corsica, and a few straggling pains only remained. But *this morning* he returned in full force, and his name is Legion. Giant-fiend of a hundred hands, with a shower of arrowy death-pangs he transpierced me, and then he became a wolf, and lay a-gnawing at my bones! I am not mad, most noble Festus, but in sober sadness I have suffered this day more bodily pain than I had before a conception of. My right cheek has certainly been placed with admirable exactness under the focus of some invisible burning-glass, which concentrated all the rays of a Tartarean sun. My medical attendant decides it to be altogether nervous, and that it originates either in severe application, or excessive anxiety. My beloved Poole! in excessive anxiety, I believe it might originate. I have a blister under my right ear, and I take twenty-five drops of laudanum every five hours, the ease and *spirits* gained by which have enabled me to write you this flighty but not exaggerated account. With a gloomy wantonness of imagination I had been coquetting with the hideous *possibles* of disappointment. I drank fears like wormwood, yea, made myself drunken with bitterness; for my ever-shaping and distrustful mind still mingled gall-drops, till out of the cup of hope I almost *poisoned* myself with despair . . .

34. To John Thelwall

Saturday, November 19, [1796]
Oxford Street, Bristol.

. . . Your portrait of yourself interested me. As to me, my face, unless when animated by immediate eloquence, expresses great sloth, and great, indeed, almost idiotic good-nature. 'Tis a mere carcass of a face; fat, flabby, and expressive chiefly of inexpression. Yet I am told that my eyes, eyebrows, and forehead are physiognomically good; but of this the deponent

knoweth not. As to my shape, 't is a good shape enough if measured, but my gait is awkward, and the walk of the whole man indicates *indolence capable of energies*. I am, and ever have 1796 been, a great reader, and have read almost everything—a library cormorant. I am *deep* in all out of the way books, whether of the monkish times, or of the puritanical era. I have read and digested most of the historical writers; but I do not *like* history. Metaphysics and poetry and “facts of mind,” that is, accounts of all the strange phantasms that ever possessed “your philosophy”; dreamers, from Thoth the Egyptian to Taylor the English pagan, are my darling studies. In short, I seldom read except to amuse myself, and I am almost always reading. Of useful knowledge, I am a so-so chemist, and I love chemistry. All else is *blank*; but I *will* be (please God) an horticulturalist and a farmer. I compose very little, and I absolutely hate composition, and such is my dislike that even a sense of duty is sometimes too weak to overpower it.

I cannot breathe through my nose, so my mouth, with sensual thick lips, is almost always open. In conversation I am impassioned, and oppose what I deem error with an eagerness which is often mistaken for personal asperity; but I am ever so swallowed up in the *thing* that I perfectly forget my *opponent*. Such am I. I am just going to read Dupuis' twelve octavos, which I have got from London. I shall read only one octavo a week, for I cannot *speak* French at all and I read it slowly.

My wife is well and desires to be remembered to you and your *Stella* and little ones. N.B. *Stella* (among the Romans) was a man's name. All the *classics* are against you; but our Swift, I suppose, is authority for this unsexing.

Write on the receipt of this, and believe me as ever, with affectionate esteem, Your sincere friend, .

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S. I have enclosed a five-guinea note. The five shillings over please to lay out for me thus. In White's (of Fleet Street or the

1796 Strand, I forget which—O! the Strand, I believe, but I don't know which), well, in White's catalogues are the following books:—

4674. Iamblichus, Proclus, Porphyrius, etc., one shilling and sixpence, one little volume.

4686. Juliani Opera, three shillings: which two books you will be so kind as to purchase for me, and send down with the twenty-five pamphlets. But if they should unfortunately be sold, in the same catalogue are:—

2109 Juliani Opera, 12s. 6d.

676. Iamblichus de Mysteriis, 10s. 6d.

2681. Sidonius Apollinaris, 6s.

And in the catalogue of Robson, the bookseller in New Bond Street, Plotini Opera, a Ficino, £1.1.0, making altogether £2.10.0.

If you can get the two former little books, costing only four and sixpence, I will rest content with them; if they are gone, be so kind as to purchase for me the others I mentioned to you, amounting to two pounds, ten shillings; and, as in the course of next week I shall send a small parcel of books and manuscripts to my very dear Charles Lamb of the India House, I shall be enabled to convey the money to you in a letter, which he will leave at your house. I make no apology for this commission, because I feel (to use a vulgar phrase) that I would do as much for you. P.P.S. Can you buy them time enough to send down with your pamphlets? If not, make a parcel *per se*. I hope your hurts from the fall are not serious; you have given a proof now that you are no *Ippokrite*, but I forgot that you are not a Greekist, and perchance you hate puns; but, in Greek, Krites signifies a judge and *hippos* a horse. Hippocrite, therefore, may mean a *judge of horses*. My dear fellow, I laugh more and talk more nonsense in a week than [most] other people do in a year. Farewell.

35. To Thomas Poole

Monday night. 1796

I wrote the former letter immediately on receipt of yours, in the first flutter of agitation. The tumult of my spirits has now subsided, but the Damp struck into my very heart; and there I feel it. O my God! my God! where am I to find rest? Disappointment follows disappointment, and Hope seems given me merely to prevent my becoming callous to Misery. Now I know not where to turn myself. I was on my way to the City Library, and wrote an answer to it there. Since I have returned I have been poring into a book, as a shew for not looking at my wife and the baby. By God, I dare not look at them. Acton! The very name makes me grind my teeth! What am I to do there?

"You will have a good garden; you may, I doubt not, have ground." But am I not ignorant as a child of everything that concerns the garden and the ground? and shall I have one human being there who will instruct me? The House too—what should I do with it? We want but two rooms, or three at the furthest. And the country around is intolerably flat. I would as soon live on the banks of a Dutch canal! And no one human being near me for whom I should, or could, care a rush! No one walk where the beauties of nature might endear solitude to me! There is one Ghost that I am afraid of with that I should be perpetually haunted in this same cursed Acton—the hideous Ghost of departed Hope. O Poole! how could you make such a proposal to me? I have compelled myself to repulse your letter, if by any means I may be able to penetrate into your motives. I find three reasons assigned for my not settling at Stowey. The first, the distance from my friends and the Press. This I answered in the former letter. As to my friends, what can they do for me? And as to the Press, even if Cottle had not promised to correct it for me, yet I might as

well be fifty miles from it as twelve, for any purpose of correcting. Secondly, the expense of moving. Well, but I must move to Acton, and what will the difference be? Perhaps three guineas . . . I would give three guineas that you had not assigned this reason. Thirdly, the wretchedness of that cottage, which alone we can get. But surely, in the house which I saw, *two* rooms may be found, which, by a little green list and a carpet, and a slight alteration in the fireplace, may be made to exclude the cold: and this is all we want. Besides, it will be but, for a while. If Cruikshank cannot buy and repair Adscombe, I have no doubt that my friends here and at Birmingham would, some of them, purchase it. So much for the reasons: but these cannot be the real reasons. I was with you for a week, and then we talked over the whole scheme, and you approved of it, and I gave up Derby. More than nine weeks have elapsed since then, and you saw and examined the cottage, and you knew every other of these reasons, if reasons they can be called. Surely, surely, my friend, something has occurred which you have not mentioned to me. Your mother has manifested a strong dislike to our living near you—or something or other; for the reasons you have assigned tell me nothing except that there are reasons which you have not assigned.

Pardon, if I write vehemently. I meant to have written calmly: but bitterness of soul came upon me. Mrs. Coleridge has observed the workings of my face while I have been writing, and is entreating to know what is the matter. I dread to show her your letter. I dread it. My God! my God! What if she should dare to think that my most beloved friend has grown cold towards me!

Tuesday morning, 11 o'clock.—After an unquiet and almost sleepless night, I resume my pen. As the sentiments overleaf came into my heart, I will not suppress them. I would keep a letter by me which I wrote to a more acquaintance, lest anything unwise should be found in it; but my friend ought to

know not only what my sentiments are, but what my feelings were.

I am, indeed, perplexed and cast down. My first plan, you know, was this—My family was to have consisted of Charles Lloyd, my wife and wife's mother, my infant, the servant, and myself. 1796

My means of maintaining them - Eighty pounds a year from Charles Lloyd, and forty from the Review and Magazine. My time was to have been divided into four parts: 1. Three hours after breakfast to studies with C. L. 2. The remaining hours till dinner to our garden. 3. From after dinner till tea, to letter-writing and domestic quietness. 4. From tea till prayer-time to the reviews, magazines, and other literary labours.

In this plan I calculated nothing on my garden but amusement. In the mean time I heard from Birmingham that Lloyd's father had declared that he should insist on his son's returning to him at the close of a twelvemonth. What am I to do then? I shall be again afloat on the wide sea, unpiloted and unprovided. I determined to devote my *utile day* to the acquirement of practical horticulture, to part with Lloyd immediately, and live without a servant. Lloyd intreated me to give up the Review and Magazine, and devote the evenings to him, but this would be to give up a permanent for a temporary situation, and after subtracting £40 from C.L.L.'s £80 in return for the Review business, and then calculating the expense of a servant, a less severe mode of general living, and Lloyd's own board and lodging, the remaining £40 would make but a poor figure. And what was I to do at the end of a twelvemonth? In the mean time Mrs. Fricker's son could not be got out as an apprentice - he was too young, and premiumless, and no one would take him; and the old lady herself manifested a great aversion to leaving Bristol. I recurred therefore to my first promise of allowing her £20 a year; but all her furniture must

of course be returned, and enough only remains to furnish one bedroom and a kitchen-parlour.

1796 If Charles Lloyd and the servant went with me I must have bought new furniture to the amount of £40 or £50, which, if not Impossibility in person, was Impossibility's first cousin. We determined to live by ourselves. We arranged our time, money, and employments. We found it not only practicable *but easy*; and Mrs. Coleridge entered with enthusiasm into the scheme.

To Mrs. Coleridge the nursing and sewing only would have belonged; the rest I took upon myself, and since our resolution have been learning the practice. With only two rooms and two people—their wants severely simple—no great labour can there be in their waiting upon themselves. Our washing we should put out. I should have devoted my whole head, heart, and body to my acre and a half of garden land, and my evenings to literature. Mr. and Mrs. Estlin approved, admired, and applauded the scheme, and thought it not only highly virtuous, but highly prudent. In the course of a year and a half, I doubt not that I should feel myself independent, for my bodily strength would have increased, and I should have been weaned from animal food, so as never to touch it but once a week; and there can be no shadow of a doubt that an acre and a half of land, divided properly, and managed properly, would maintain a small family in *everything* but clothes and rent. What had I to ask of my friends? Not money; for a temporary relief of my want is nothing, removes no gnawing of anxiety, and debases the dignity of man. Not their interest. What could their interest (supposing they had any) do for me? I can accept no place in state, church, or dissenting meeting. Nothing remains possible but a school, or writer to a newspaper, or my present plan. I could not love the man who advised me to keep a school, or write for a newspaper. He must have a hard heart. What then could I ask of my friends? What of Mr. Wade?

Nothing. What of Mr. Cottle? Nothing . . . What of Thomas Poole? Oh a great deal. Instruction, daily advice, society—everything necessary to my feelings and the realization of my innocent independence. You know it would be impossible for me to learn *everything* myself. To pass across my garden once or twice a day, for five minutes, to set me right, and cheer me with the sight of a friend's face, would be more to me than hundreds. Your letter was not a kind one. One week only and I must leave my house, and yet in one week you advise me to alter the plan, which I had been three months framing, and in which you must have known by the letters I wrote you, during my illness, that I was interested even to an excess and violence of Hope. And to abandon this plan for darkness and a renewal of anxieties which might be fatal to me! Not one word have you mentioned how I am to live, or even exist, supposing I were to go to Acton. Surely, surely, you do not advise me to lean with the whole weight of my necessities on the Press? Ghosts indeed! I should be haunted with ghosts enough—the ghosts of Otway and Chatterton, and the phantasms of a wife broken-hearted, and a hunger-bitten baby! O Thomas Poole! Thomas Poole! if you did but know what a Father and a Husband must feel who toils with his brain for uncertain bread! I dare not think of it. The evil face of Frenzy looks at me. The husbandman puts his seed in the ground, and the goodness, power, and wisdom of God have pledged themselves that he shall have bread, and health, and quietness in return for industry, and simplicity of wants and innocence. The AUTHOR scatters his seed—with aching head, and wasted health, and all the heart-leapings of anxiety; and the follies, the vices, and the fickleness of man promise him printers' bills and the Debtors' Side of Newgate as full and sufficient payment.

Charles Lloyd is at Birmingham. I hear from him daily. In his yesterday's letter he says: "My dearest friend, everything

seems clearing around me. My friends enter fully into my views. They seem altogether to have abandoned any ambitious view on my account. My health has been very good since I left you; and I own I look forward with more pleasure than ever to a permanent connection with you. Hitherto I could only look forward to the pleasures of a year. All beyond was dark and uncertain. My father now completely acquiesces in my abandoning the prospect of any profession or trade. If God grant me health, there now remains no obstacle to a completion of my most sanguine wishes." Charles Lloyd will furnish his own room, and feels it his duty to be in all things his own servant. He will put up a press-bed, so that one room will be his bedchamber and parlour; and I shall settle with him the hours and seasons of our being together, and the hours and seasons of our being apart. But I shall rely on him for nothing except his own maintenance.

As to the poems, they are Cottle's property, not mine. There is no obstacle from me - no new poems intended to be put in the volume, except the "Visions of the Maid of Orleans." . . . But literature, though I shall never abandon it, will always be a secondary object with me. My poetic vanity and my political *furor* have been exhaled; and I would rather be an expert, self-maintaining gardener than a Milton, if I could not unite both.

My friend, wherein I have written impetuously, pardon me! and consider what I have suffered, and still am suffering, in consequence of your letter . . .

Finally, my Friend! if your opinion of me and your attachment to me remain unaltered, and if you have assigned the true reasons which urged you to dissuade me from a settlement at Stowey, and if indeed (provided such settlement were consistent with my good and happiness), it would give you unmixed pleasure, I adhere to Stowey, and consider the time from last evening as a distempered dream. But if any circumstances have occurred that have lessened your love or esteem or con-

fidence; or if there be objections to my settling in Stoney on your own account, or any other objections than what you have urged, I doubt not you will declare them openly and unreservedly to me, in your answer to this, which I shall expect with a total incapability of doing or thinking of anything, till I have received it. Indeed, indeed, I am very miserable. God bless you and your affectionate 1796

S. T. COLLRIDGE.

Tuesday, December 13, 1796.

36. To John Thelwall

December 17, 1796.

. . . And now, my dear fellow, for a little sparring about poetry. My first *sonnet is obscure*, but you ought to distinguish between obscurity residing in the uncommonness of the thought, and that which proceeds from thoughts unconnected and language not adapted to the expression of them. Where you do find out the meaning of my poetry, can you (in general, I mean) alter the language so as to make it more perspicuous—the thought remaining the same? By “dreamy semblance” I *did* mean semblance of some unknown past, like to a dream, and not “a semblance *presented* in a dream.” I meant to express that oftentimes, for a second or two, it flashed upon my mind that the then company, conversation, and everything, had occurred before with all the precise circumstances; so as to make reality appear a semblance, and the present like a dream in sleep. Now this thought is *obscure*; because few persons have experienced the same feeling. Yet several have; and they were proportionably delighted with the lines, as expressing some strange sensations, which they themselves had never ventured

to communicate, much less had ever seen developed in poetry.
The lines I have altered to,—

1796

*Oft o'er my brain does that strange rapture roll
Which makes the present (while its brief fit last)
Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past,
Mixed with such feelings as distress the soul
When dreaming that she dreams.*

Next as to "mystical." Now that the thinking part of man, that is, the soul, existed previously to its appearance in its present body may be very wild philosophy, but it is very intelligible poetry; inasmuch as "soul" is an orthodox word in all our poets, they meaning by "soul" a being inhabiting our body, and playing upon it, like a musician enclosed in an organ whose keys were placed inwards. Now this opinion I do not hold; not that I am a materialist, but because I am a Berkleyan. Yet as you, who are not a Christian, wished you were, that we might meet in heaven, so I, who did not believe in this descending and incarcerated soul, yet said if my baby had died before I had seen him I should have *struggled* to believe it. Bless me! a commentary of thirty-five lines in defence of a sonnet! and I do not like the sonnet much myself. In some (indeed, in many of my poems) there is a garishness and swell of diction which I hope that my poems in future, if I write any, will be clean of, but seldom, I think, any *conceits*. In the second edition, now printing, I have swept the book with the expurgation-besom to a fine tune, having omitted nearly one third. As to Bowles, I affirm that the manner of his accentuation in the words "broad daylight" (three long syllables) is a beauty, as it admirably expresses the captive's dwelling on the sight of noon with rapture and a kind of wonder.

*The common sun, the air, the skies
To him are opening paradise.*

GRAY

But supposing my defence not tenable; yet how a blunder in metre stamps a man Italian or Della Cruscan I cannot perceive. As to my own poetry, I do confess that it frequently, 1796 both in thought and language, deviates from "nature and simplicity." But that Bowles, the most tender, and, with the exception of Burns, the only *always natural* in our language, that *he* should not escape the charge of Della Cruscanism,—this cuts the skin and surface of my heart. "Poetry to have its highest relish must be impassioned." True. But, firstly, poetry ought not always to have its *highest* relish; and, secondly, judging of the cause from its effect, poetry, though treating on lofty and abstract truths, ought to be deemed *impassioned* by him who reads it with impassioned feelings. Now Collins's "Ode on the Poetical Character,"—that part of it, I should say, beginning with "The band (as faery legends say) Was wove on that creative day,"—has inspired and whirled *me* along with greater agitations of enthusiasm than any the most impassioned scene in Schiller or Shakespeare, using "*impassioned*" in its confined sense, for writing in which the human passions of pity, fear, anger, revenge, jealousy, or love are brought into view with their workings. Yet I consider the latter poetry as more valuable, because it gives *more general* pleasure, and I judge of all things by their utility. I feel strongly and I think strongly, but I seldom feel without thinking or think without feeling. Hence, though my poetry has in general a hue of tenderness or passion over it, yet it seldom exhibits unmixed and simple tenderness or passion. My philosophical opinions are blended with or deduced from my feelings, and this, I think, peculiarises my style of writing, and, like everything else, it is sometimes a beauty and sometimes a fault. But do not let us introduce an Act of Uniformity against Poets. I have room enough in *my* brain to admire, aye, and almost equally, the *head* and fancy of Akenside, and the heart and fancy of Bowles, the solemn lordliness of Milton,

and the divine chit-chat of Cowper. And whatever a man's excellence is, that will be likewise his fault . . .

1796

. . . Now, in your letter of yesterday, you speak with *contempt* of two things: old age and the Christian religion; though religion was believed by Newton, Locke, and Hartley, after intense investigation, which in each had been preceded by unbelief. This does not prove its truth, but it should save its followers from *contempt*, even though through the infirmities of mortality, they should have *lost their teeth*. I call that man a bigot, Thelwall, whose intemperate zeal, for or against any opinions, leads him to contradict himself in the space of half a dozen lines. Now this you appear to me to have done. I will write fully to you now, because I shall never renew the subject. I shall not be idle in defence of the religion I profess, and my books will be the place, not my letters. You say the Christian is a *mean* religion. Now the religion which Christ taught is simply, first, that there is an omnipresent Father of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, in whom we all of us move and have our being; and, secondly, that when we appear to men to die we do not utterly perish, but after this life shall continue to enjoy or suffer the consequences and natural effects of the habits we have formed here, whether good or evil. This is the Christian *religion*, and all of the Christian *religion*. That there is no *fancy* in it I readily grant, but that it is mean and deficient in *mind* and *energy* it were impossible for me to admit, unless I admitted that there *could be* no dignity, intellect, or force in anything but *atheism*. But though it appeal not itself to the fancy, the truths which it teaches admit the highest exercise of it. Are the "innumerable multitude of angels and archangels" less splendid beings than the countless gods and goddesses of Rome and Greece? And can you seriously think that Mercury from Jove equals in poetic sublimity "the mighty angel that came down from heaven, whose face was as it were the sun and his feet as pillars of fire:

who set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth. And he sent forth a loud voice; and when he had sent it forth, seven thunders uttered their voices: and when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, the mighty Angel lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever that *Time* was no more"? Is not Milton a sublimer poet than Homer or Virgil? Are not his personages more sublimely clothed, and do you not know that there is not perhaps *one page* in Milton's *Paradise Lost* in which he has not borrowed his imagery from the *Scriptures*? I allow and rejoice that *Christ* appealed only to the understanding and the affections; but I affirm that after reading Isaiah, or St. Paul's "Epistle to the Hebrews," Homer and Virgil are disgustingly *tame* to me, and Milton himself barely tolerable . . .

1796

37. To John Thelwall

December 30, 1796.

Enough, my dear Thelwall, of theology. In my book on Godwin, I compare the two systems, his and Jesus', and that book I am sure you will read with attention. I entirely accord with your opinion of Southey's "Joan." The ninth book is execrable, and the poem, though it frequently reach the *sentimental*, does not display the *poetical-sublime*. In language at once natural, perspicuous, and dignified in manly pathos, in soothing and sonnet-like description, and, above all, in character and *dramatic* dialogue, Southey is unrivalled; but as certainly he does not possess opulence of imaginative lofty-paced harmony, or that *tool* of thinking which is necessary in order to plan a *whole*. Dismissing mock humility, and hanging your mind as a looking glass over my idea-pot, so as to image on the said mind all the bubbles that boil in the said

1796 idea-pot (there's a damned long-winded metaphor for you), I think that an admirable poet might be made by *amalgamating* him and me. I think too much for a *poet*, he too little for a *great* poet. But he abjures *feeling*. Now (as you say) they must go together. Between ourselves the *enthusiasm* of friendship is not with S. and me. We quarrelled and the quarrel lasted for a twelvemonth. We are now reconciled; but the cause of the difference was solemn, and "the blasted oak puts not forth its buds anew." We are *acquaintances*, and feel *kindliness* towards each other, but I do not *esteem* or *love* Southey, as I must esteem and love the man whom I dared call by the holy name of *friend*: and vice versâ Southey of me. I say no more. It is a painful subject, and do you say nothing. I mention this for obvious reasons, but let it go no farther. It is a painful subject. Southey's direction at present is R. Southey, No. 8 West-gate Buildings, Bath, but he leaves Bath for London in the course of a week. You imagine that I know Bowles personally. I never saw him but once, and when I was a boy and in Salisbury market-place . . .

38. To Robert Southey

Tuesday Morning, [1797]

I thank you, Robert Southey, for your poems, and by way of return present you with a collection of (what appear to me) the faults—"The Race of Banquo" and "To the Genius of Africa" ought to have rescued the ode from your very harsh censure. The latter is perfect, saving the last line which is one of James Hennings' *new thoughts*; and besides who after having been whirled along by such a tide of enthusiasm can endure to be impaled at last on the needle-point of an Antithesis? Of the Inscriptions I like the first and last the least: all the rest almost

equally, and each very much. In the spirited and most original lines to your own miniature "wrong" *rhymes* with "solitary song." You, I doubt not, have associated feelings dear to you with the ideas "this little picture was for ornament designed" etc.—and therefore do right in retaining them. To me and, I suppose, most strangers the four last lines appear to drag excrementitiously—the Poem would conclude more satisfactorily at "Spirit of Spenser! was the Wanderer wrong?" The fault of the four lines *seems* to be that having digressed you do not *lead* yourself to your subject, but without ceremony take a huge *leap* back again. Now though it is always well to *leave* the subject on the mind, yet rather than use such means I would forego it. "The Poem on the Death of an old Spaniel" will, I doubt not, be set to music by angelic and archangelic dogs in their state of exaltation. It is a poem which will do good and that is *say*, a great deal. In the Ode to Contemplation "the smoke long shadowing play" is scarcely accurate—"the smoke's long shadow" would surely be more natural and perspicuous. "The Musings on a Landscape" is a delicious poem. The words *To Him* begin the line awkwardly to *my* ear. The final pause at the end of the first two syllables of a line is seldom tolerable, except when the first two syllables form a trochee. The reason, I apprehend, is that to the ear they with the line foregoing make an Alexandrine. I have animadverted on these poems only which are my particular favourites and now for the Penates which if I were to abandon my judgement to the impulse of present Feelings I should pronounce the most interesting poem of its length in our Language. I have detected two faults only that a man amid the Miseries of a struggling Life should look back on the quiet happiness of childhood bears no resemblance to a Persian Monarch leaving the Luxuries of a Palace to revisit the cot where he had been a shepherd. But the *five first lines* of the Poem—they are very, very *beautiful*, but (pardon my obtuseness) have they any

meaning? "The Temple of Pagan" does not, I presume, mean any ~~real~~ temple but is only an allegorical building expressing Poesy—Either ancient or modern. If modern how is its wall ruined? If ancient how do *you* hang up your silent harp on it? Does it allude to ancient poetry as expressing the subject of the Present Poem? yet you say, that you shall strike that "high and solemn strain" *ere* you hang it up. (Besides is *Pagan* the God of *Poetry*? I think that the ancients religiously confined the name to Apollo in his capacity of Healer and *Python-killer* but of this I am not certain.) However, whether ancient or modern poesy be indicated or whatever may be the import of each distinct image your general meaning is clear—namely that after this song you will intermit the writing of Poetry. Yet in the next lines you say, these many strings make melancholy music—i.e. 'Tis one song and then I will *discontinue* verse-writing—during which discontinuance I will write verses! Is all this only my obtuseness and frigidity? or have you not faultily mixed spiritual with corporal, allegorical meanings with meanings predicable only of catgut and rosin, bricks and mortar? A tempest may shake an aged pile, but what has a tempest to do with ancient poetry? If there were any respectable God with a respectable name who presided over the Law, or the affairs of active Life in general, you would have acted wiser, (I speak not dogmatically but merely say I think you would have acted wiser) if you had hung up your harp on the walls of his Temple and added—yet shall its strings (if any ruder storm is abroad) make melancholy music i.e. 'Tho' I intermit my Poetry in consequence of the calls of Business yet if any particular occasion arrive, I will *unhang* my harp. What if you *left* the harp in the fane of Vacuna? If these observations strike you as just I shall be sorry they did not strike me when you *read* the Poem. But indeed the Lines sound so sweet, and *seem* so much like sense, that it is no great matter. 'Tis a handsome and finely-sculptured Tomb and few will break it open with

the sacrilegious spade and pick-ax of Criticism to discover whether or no it be not a *Cenotaph*.

I have been in bed for these two days, the effect of a dire cold and feverish complaint but I am better now and leave Bristol on 'Thursday — 1797

S. T. COLERIDGE.

39. To John Thelwall

Stowey near Bridgewater, Somerset.

February 6, 1797.

. . . I never go to Bristol. From seven till half past eight I work in my garden; from breakfast till twelve I read and compose, then read again, feed the pigs, poultry, etc., till two o'clock after dinner work again till tea; from tea till supper, *review*. So jogs the day, and I am happy. I have society—*my friend* T. Poole, and as many acquaintances as I can dispense with. There are a number of very pretty young women on Stowey, all musical, and I am an immense favourite: for I pun, conundrumize, *list u*, and dance. The last is a recent acquirement. We are very happy, and my little David Hartley grows a sweet boy and has high health; he laughs at us till he makes us weep for very fondness. You would smile to see my eye rolling up to the ceiling in a lyric fury, and on my knee a diaper pinned to warm. I send and receive to and from Bristol every week, and will transcribe that part of your last letter and send it to Reed.

I raise potatoes and all manner of vegetables, have an orchard, and shall raise corn with the spade, enough for my family. We have two pigs, and ducks and geese. A cow would not answer the keep: for we have whatever milk we want from T. Poole. God bless you and your affectionate

S. T. COLERIDGE.

40. To Joseph Cottle

1797

June, 1797.

MY DEAR COTTLE,

I am sojourning for a few days at Racedown, the mansion of our friend Wordsworth, who has received Fox's "Achmed." He returns you his acknowledgments, and presents his kindest respects to you. I shall be home by Friday—not to-morrow—but the next Friday. If the "Ode on the Departing Year" be not reprinted, please to *omit* the lines from "When shall scepter'd slaughter cease," to "For still does Madness roam on Guilt's bleak dizzy height," inclusive. The first epode is to end at the words "murderer's fate." Wordsworth admires my tragedy, which gives me great hopes. Wordsworth has written a tragedy himself. I speak with heartfelt sincerity, and (I think) unblinded judgment, when I tell you that I feel myself *a little man by his side*, and yet do not think myself the less man than I formerly thought myself. His drama is absolutely wonderful. You know I do not commonly speak in such abrupt and unmingled phrases, and therefore will the more readily believe me. There are in the piece those *profound* touches of the human heart which I find three or four times in "The Robbers" of Schiller, and often in Shakespeare, but in Wordsworth there are no *inequalities*. T. Poole's opinion of Wordsworth is that he is the greatest man he ever knew; I coincide.

It is not impossible, that in the course of two or three months I may see you. God bless you, and

R. COLERIDGE.

Thursday.—Of course, with the lines you omit the notes that relate to them.

Mr. Cottle, Bookseller, High Street, Bristol.

41. To Robert Southey

July, 1797. 1797

DEAR SOUTHEY,

You are acting kindly in your exertions for Chatterton's sister; but I doubt the success. Chatterton's or Rowley's poems were never popular. The very circumstance which made them so much talked of, their *ancientness*, prevented them from being generally read, in the degree, I mean, that Goldsmith's poems or even Rogers' thing upon memory has been. The sale was never very great. Secondly, the London Edition and the Cambridge Edition, which are now both of them the property of London booksellers, are still in hand, and these booksellers will "hardly exert their interest for a rival." *Thirdly, these are bad times.* Fourthly, all who are sincerely zealous for Chatterton, or who from knowledge of her are interested in poor Mrs. Newton, will come forward first, and if others should drop in but slowly, Mrs. Newton will either receive no benefit at all from those her friends, or one so long procrastinated, from the necessity of waiting for the complement of subscribers, that it may at last come too late. For these reasons I am almost inclined to think a *subscription* simply would be better. It is unpleasant to cast a damp on anything; but that benevolence alone is likely to be beneficent which *calculates*. If, however, you continue to entertain higher hopes than I, believe me, I will shake off my sloth, and use my best muscles in gaining subscribers. I will certainly write a preliminary essay, and I will *attempt* to write a poem on the life and death of Chatterton, but the Monody *must not be reprinted*. Neither this nor the Pixies' Parlour would have been in the second edition, but for dear Cottle's solicitous importunity. Excepting the last eighteen lines of the Monody, which, though deficient in chasteness and severity of diction, breathe a pleasing spirit of romantic feeling, there are not five lines in either poem which might

not have been written by a man who had lived and died in the self-same St. Giles' cellar, in which he had been first suckled by a drab with milk and gin. The Pixies is the least disgusting, because the subject leads you to expect nothing, but on a life and death so full of heart-going *realities* as 'poor Chatterton's, to find such shadowy nobodies as cherub-winged *Death*, Trees of *Hope*, bare-bosomed *Affection* and simpering, *Peace*, makes one's blood circulate like ipecacuanha. But so it is. A young man by strong feelings is impelled to write on a particular subject, and this is all his feelings do for him. They set him upon the business and then they leave him. He has such a high idea of what poetry ought to be, that he cannot conceive that such things as his natural emotions may be allowed to find a place in it; his learning therefore, his fancy, or rather conceit, and all his powers of buckram are put on the stretch. It appears to me that strong feeling is not so requisite to an author's being profoundly pathetic as taste and good sense . . .

I had been on a visit to Wordsworth's at Racedown, near Crewkerne, and I brought him and his sister back with me, and here I have *settled them*. By a combination of curious circumstances a gentleman's seat, with a park and woods, elegantly and completely furnished, with nine lodging rooms, three parlours, and a hall, in the most beautiful and romantic situation by the seaside, four miles from Stowey, -- this we have got for Wordsworth at the *rent of twenty-three pounds a year, taxes included!* The park and woods are *his* for all purposes *he* wants them, and the large gardens are altogether and entirely his. Wordsworth is a very great man, the only man to whom *at all times and in all modes of excellence* I feel myself inferior, the only one, I mean, whom *I have yet met with*, for the London *literati* appear to me to be very much like little potatoes, that is, *no great things*, a compost of nullity and dullity.

Charles Lamb has been with me for a week. He left me Friday morning. The second day after Wordsworth came to me,

dear Sara accidentally emptied a skillet of boiling milk on my foot, which confined me during the whole time of C. Lamb's stay and still prevents me from all *walks* longer than a furlong. 1797 While Wordsworth, his sister, and Charles Lamb were out one evening, sitting in the arbour of T. Poole's garden which communicates with mine I wrote these lines, with which I am pleased . . .

(Here follows the poem entitled "This lime-tree bower my prison.")

42. To John Thelwall

Saturday morning [October 16], 1797.

MY DEAR THELWALL,

I have just received your letter, having been absent a day or two, and have already, before I write to you, written to Dr. Beddoes. I would to Heaven it were in my power, to serve you; but alas! I have neither money or influence, and I suppose that at last I must become a Unitarian minister, as a less evil than starvation. For I get nothing by literature . . . You have my wishes and, what is very liberal in me for such an atheist reprobate, my prayers. I can *at times* feel strongly the beauties you describe, in themselves and for themselves; but more frequently *all things* appear *little*, all the knowledge that can be acquired child's play; the universe itself! what but an immense heap of *little* things? I can contemplate nothing but *parts*, and parts are all *little*! My mind feels as if it ached to behold and know something *great*, something *one* and *indivisible*. And it is only in the faith of that that rocks or waterfalls, mountains or caverns, give me the sense of sublimity or *majesty*! But in this faith *all things* counterfeit infinity.

*"Struck with the deepest calm of joy," I stand
 Silent, with swimming sense; and gazing round
 On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
 Less gross than bodily, a living Thing
 Which acts upon the mind and with such hues
 As clothe th' Almighty Spirit, where He makes
 Spirits perceive His presence! . . .*

It is but seldom that I raise and spiritualize my intellect to this height; and at other times I adopt the Brahmin creed, and say, "It is better to sit than to stand, it is better to lie than to sit, it is better to sleep than to wake, but Death is the best of all!" I should much wish, like the Indian Vishnu, to float about along an infinite ocean cradled in the flower of the Lotus, and wake once in a million years for a few minutes just to know that I was going to sleep a million years more. I have put this feeling in the mouth of Alhadra, my Moorish Woman* . . .

'43. To Josiah Wedgwood

In 1797 the brothers Tom and Josiah Wedgwood, sons of the famous potter, settled on Coleridge an annuity of £150 a year for life, unconditionally, and 'independent of everything but the wreck of our fortune.' This annuity was settled on Coleridge by the brothers, upon their hearing that he was about to accept the incumbency of the Unitarian Chapel at Shrewsbury. Coleridge had previously returned a cheque for £100 sent by them, on the grounds that even if he accepted it, he would still remain without financial security. Tom Wedgwood died in 1805, and Josiah in 1812 withdrew his share of the annuity, on the grounds of financial reverses. That he had also lost faith in Coleridge seems clear.

*A character in Coleridge's 'Osorio' (Act V, Sc. I, l.39).

Shrewsbury, January 17, 1798.

DEAR SIR,

Yesterday morning I received the letter which you addressed 1798
to me in your own and your brother's name. Your benevolence
appeared so strange and it came upon my mind with such
suddenness, that for a while I sat and mused on it with scarce
a reference to myself, and gave you a moral approbation almost
wholly unmingled with those personal feelings which have
since filled my eyes with tears—which do so even now while I
am writing to you. What can I say? I accept your proposal
not unagitated but yet, I trust, in the same worthy spirit in
which you made it.—I return to Stowey in a few days. Dis-
embarrassed from all pecuniary anxieties yet unshackled by
any regular profession, with powerful motives and no less
powerful propensities to honourable effort, it is my duty to
indulge the hope that at some future period I shall have given
a proof that as your intentions were eminently virtuous, so
the action itself was not unbeneficent.

With great affection and esteem

I remain

Yours sincerely

S. T. COLERIDGE.

44. To The Rev. George Coleridge

Ap. il, 1798.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

An illness, which confined me to my bed, prevented me from
returning an immediate answer to your kind and interesting
letter. My indisposition originated in the stump of a tooth
over which some matter had formed; this affected my eye, my
eye my stomach, my stomach my head, and the consequence
was a general fever, and the sum of pain was considerably

1798 increased by the vain attempt of our surgeon to extract the offending member. Laudanum gave me repose, not sleep; but you, I believe, know how divine that repose is, what a spot of enchantment, a green spot of fountain and flowers and trees in the very heart of a waste of sands! . . .

45. To Charles Lamb

This breach with Lamb, afterwards healed, was brought about by Charles Lloyd who had been living as a member of Coleridge's household. Lloyd published a novel, Edmund Oliver, in which a malignant attack on Coleridge is plainly intended in some passages of the hero's life. Southey, whose reconciliation with Coleridge was at this time only a formal one, saw (wrongly as Coleridge affirmed) in one of Coleridge's mock Sonnets on Simplicity, a parody on his earlier poems. Southey, Lloyd and Lamb, in consequence, had at this time drawn together and both were estranged from Coleridge.

[Spring of 1798.]

DEAR LAMB,

Lloyd has informed me through Miss Wordsworth that you intend no longer to correspond with me. This has given me little pain; not that I do not love and esteem you, but on the contrary because I am confident that your intentions are pure. You are performing what you deem a duty, and humanly speaking have that merit which can be derived from the performance of a painful duty. Painful, for you would not without struggles abandon me in behalf of a man who, wholly ignorant of all but your name, became attached to you in consequence of my attachment, caught *his* from *my* enthusiasm, and learned to love you at my fireside, when often while I have been sitting and talking of your sorrows and afflictions I have stopped my conversations and lifted up wet eyes and

prayed for you. No! I am confident that although you do not think as a wise man, you feel as a good man.

From you I have received little pain, because for you I suffer 1798
little alarm. I cannot say this for your friend; it appears to me evident that his feelings are vitiated, and that his ideas are in their combination merely the creatures of those feelings. I have received letters from him, and the best and kindest wish • which, as a Christian, I can offer in return is that he may feel remorse.

Some brief resentments rose in my mind, but they did not remain there; for I began to think almost immediately, and my resentments vanished. There has resulted only a sort of fantastic scepticism concerning my own consciousness of my own rectitude. As dreams have impressed on him the sense of reality, my sense of reality may be but a dream. From his letters it is plain that he has mistaken the heat and bustle and swell of self-justification for the approbation of his conscience. I am certain that *this* is not the case with me, but the human heart is so wily and inventive that possibly it may be cheating me, who am an older warrior, with some newer stratagem. When I wrote to you that my Sonnet to Simplicity was not composed with reference to Southey, you answered me (I believe these were the words): "It was a lie too gross for the grossest ignorance to believe"; and I was not angry with you, because the assertion which the grossest ignorance would believe a lie the Omniscient knew to be truth. This, however, makes me cautious not too hastily to affirm the falsehood of an assertion of Lloyd's that in Edmund Oliver's love-fit, leaving college, and going into the army he had no sort of allusion to or recollection of my love-fit, leaving college, and going into the army, and that he never thought of my person in the description of Oliver's person in the first letter of the second volume. This cannot appear stranger to me than my assertion did to you, and therefore I will suspend my absolute faith.

I wrote to you not that I wish to hear from you, but that I wish you to write to Lloyd and press upon him the propriety, nay the necessity, of his giving me a meeting either *tête-à-tête* or in the presence of all whose esteem I value. This I owe to my own character; I owe it to him if by any means he may even yet be extricated. He assigned as reasons for his rupture my vices; and he is either right or wrong. If right, it is fit that others should know it and follow his example; if wrong, he has acted very wrong. At present, I may expect everything from his heated mind rather than continence of language, and his assertions will be the more readily believed on account of his former enthusiastic attachment, though with wise men this would cast a hue of suspicion over the whole affair; but the number of wise men in the kingdom would not puzzle a savage's arithmetic—you may tell them in every [community] on your fingers. I have been unfortunate in my connections. Both you and Lloyd became acquainted with me when your minds were far from being in a composed or natural state, and you clothed my image with a suit of notions and feelings which could belong to nothing human. You are restored to comparative sanity, and are merely wondering what is become of the Coleridge with whom you were so passionately in love; *Charles Lloyd's* mind has only changed his disease, and he is now arraying his *ci-devant* Angel in a flaming San Benito—the whole ground of the garment a dark brimstone and plenty of little devils flourished out in black. Oh, me! Lamb, “even in laughter the heart is sad!” My kindness, my affectionateness, he deems wheedling; but, if after reading all my letters to yourself and to him, you can suppose him wise in his treatment and correct in his accusations of me, you think worse of human nature than poor human nature, bad as it is, deserves to be thought of.

God bless you and

S. T. COLERIDGE.

46. To His Wife

Coleridge went to Germany in September, 1798, and returned in July, 1799. 1799

Ratzburg, Monday, January 14, 1799.

. . . As the sun both rises and sets over the little lake by us, both rising and setting present most lovely spectacles. In October Ratzburg used at sunset to appear completely beautiful. A deep red light spread over all, in complete harmony with the red town, the brown-red woods, and the yellow-red reeds on the skirts of the lake and on the slip of land. A few boats, paddled by single persons, used generally to be floating up and down in the rich light. But when first the ice fell on the lake, and the whole lake was frozen one large piece of thick transparent glass—O my God! what sublime scenery I have beheld. Of a morning I have seen the little lake covered with mist; when the sun peeped over the hills the mist broke in the middle, and at last stood as the waters of the Red Sea are said to have done when the Israelites passed; and between these two walls of mist the sunlight burst upon the ice in a straight road of golden fire, all across the lake, intolerably bright, and the walls of mist partaking of the light in a *multitude* of colours. About a month ago the vehemence of the wind had shattered the ice; part of it, quite shattered, was driven to shore and had frozen anew; this was of a deep blue, and represented an agitated sea—the water that ran up between the great islands of ice shone of a yellow green (it was at sunset), and all the scattered islands of *smooth* ice were *blood*, intensely bright *blood*; on some of the largest islands the fishermen were pulling out their immense nets through the holes made in the ice for this purpose, and the fishermen, the net-poles, and the huge nets made a part of the glory! O my God! how I wished you to be with me! In skating there are three pleasing circumstances—firstly, the infinitely subtle particles of ice which the

skate cuts up, and which creep and run before the skater like a low mist, and in sunrise or sunset become coloured; second, the shadow of the skater in the water seen through the transparent ice; and thirdly, the melancholy undulating sound from the skate, not without variety; and, when very many are skating together, the sounds give an impulse to the icy trees, and the woods all round the lake *tinkle*. It is a pleasant amusement to sit in an ice stool (as they are called) and be driven along by two skaters, faster than most horses can gallop. As to the customs here, they are nearly the same as in England, except that [the men] never sit after dinner [and only] drink at dinner, which often lasts three or four hours, and in noble families is divided into three gangs, that is, walks. When you have sat about an hour, you rise up, each lady takes a gentleman's arm, and you walk about for a quarter of an hour—in the mean time another course is put upon the table; and, this in great dinners, is repeated three times. A man here seldom sees his wife till dinner,—they take their coffee in separate rooms, and never eat at breakfast; only as soon as they are up they take their coffee, and about eleven o'clock eat a bit of bread and butter with the coffee. The men at least take a pipe. Indeed, a pipe at breakfast is a great addition to the comfort of life. I shall [smoke at] no other time in England. Here I smoke four times a day—1 at breakfast, 1 half an hour before dinner, 1 in the afternoon at tea, and 1 just before bed-time—but I shall give it all up, unless, as before observed, you should happen to like the smoke of a pipe at breakfast. Once when I first came here I smoked a pipe immediately after dinner; the pastor expressed his surprise: I expressed mine that he could smoke before breakfast. "O Herr Gott!" (that is, Lord God) quoth he, "it is delightful; it invigorates the frame and *it clears out the mouth so.*" A common amusement at the German Universities is for a number of young men to smoke out a candle that is, to fill a room with tobacco smoke till the candle

goes out. Pipes are quite the rage—a pipe of a particular kind, that has been smoked for a year or so, will sell here for twenty guineas—the same pipe when new costs four or five. They are called Meerschaum. 1799

God bless you, my dear Love! I will soon write again.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Postscript. Perhaps you are in Bristol. However, I had better direct it to Stowey. My love to Martha and your mother and your other sisters. Once more, my dearest Love, God love and preserve us through this long absence! O my dear Babies! my Babies!

47. To His Wife

Bei dem Radermacher Gohring, in der Bergstrasse, Gottingen.

March 12, 1799. Sunday Night.

. . . I languish after home for hours together in vacancy, my feelings almost wholly unqualified by *thoughts*. I have at times experienced such an extinction of *light* in my mind—I have been so forsaken by all the *forms* and *colourings* of existence, as if the *organs* of life had been dried up; as if only simply Being remained, blind and stagnant. After I have recovered from this strange state and reflected upon it, I have thought of a man who should lose his companion in a desert of sand, where his weary Halloos drop down in the air without an echo. I am deeply convinced that if I were to remain a few years among objects for whom I had no affection I should wholly lose the powers of intellect. Love is the vital air of my genius, and I have not seen one human being in Germany whom I can conceive it *possible* for me to *love*, no, not *one*; if my mind they are an unlovely race, these Germans . . . In a village some

1799 four miles from Einbeck we stopped about 4 o'clock in the morning. It was pitch dark, and the postillion led us into a room where there was not a ray of light—we could not see our hand—but it felt extremely warm. At length and suddenly the lamp came, and we saw ourselves in a room thirteen strides in length, strew'd with straw, and lying by the side of each other on the straw twelve Jews. I assure you it was curious. Their dogs lay at their feet. There was one very beautiful boy among them, fast asleep, with the softest conceivable opening of the mouth, with the white beard of his grandfather upon his cheek—a fair, rosy cheek.

48. To Thomas Poole

Coleridge's second son, Berkeley, died on 10th February, 1799, at the age of nine months.

April 6, 1799.

MY DEAREST POOLE,

Your two letters, dated January 24 and March 15, followed close on each other. I was still enjoying "the livelier impulse and the dance of thought" which the first had given me when I received the second. At the time, in which I read Sara's lively account of the miseries which herself and the infant had undergone, all was over and well—there was nothing to *think* of—only a mass of pain was brought suddenly and closely within the sphere of my perception, and I was made to suffer it over again. For this bodily frame is an imitative thing, and touched by the imagination gives the hour which is past as faithfully as a repeating watch. But Death—the death of an infant—of one's own infant! I read your letter in calmness, and walked out into the open fields, oppressed, not by my feelings, but by the riddles which the thought so easily proposes, and solves—

never! A parent—in the strict and exclusive sense a parent!—to me it is a *fable* wholly without meaning except in the *moral* which it suggests—a fable of which the moral is God. Be it so—my dear, dear friend! Oh let it be so! La Nature (says Pascal) “La Nature confond les Pyrrhoniens, et la Raison confond les Dogmatistes. Nous avons une impuissance à prouver invincible à tout le Dogmatisme. Nous avons une idée de la vérité invincible à tout le Pyrrhonisme.” I find it wise and human to believe, even on slight evidence, opinions, the contrary of which cannot be proved, and which promote our happiness without hampering our intellect. My baby has not lived in vain—this life has been to him what it is to all of us—education and development! Fling yourself forward into your immortality only a few thousand years, and how small will not the difference between one year old and sixty years appear! Consciousness!—it is no otherwise necessary to our conceptions of future continuance than as connecting the present link of our being with the one immediately preceding it; and *that* degree of consciousness, *that* small portion of *memory*, it would not only be arrogant, but in the highest degree absurd, to deny even to a much younger infant. ’T is a strange assertion that the essence of identity lies in *recollective* consciousness. ’T were scarcely less ridiculous to affirm that the eight miles from Stowey to Bridgewater consist in the eight milestones. Death in a dotting old age falls upon my feelings ever as a more hopeless phenomenon than death in infancy; but *nothing* is hopeless. What if the vital force which I sent from my arm into the stone as I flung it in the air and skimmed it upon the water—what if even that did not perish! It was *life*!—it was a particle of *being*!—it was power! and how could it perish? *Life, Power, Being*! Organization may and probably is their *effect*—their *cause* it *cannot* be! I have indulged very curious fancies concerning that force, that swarm of motive powers which I sent out of my body into that stone,

and which, one by one, left the untractable or already possessed mass, and—but the German Ocean lies between us. It is all too far to send you such fancies as these! Grief, indeed,—

*Doth love to dally with fantastic thoughts,
And smiling like a sickly Moralist,
Finds some resemblance to her own concern
In the straws of chance, and things inanimate*

But I cannot truly say that I grieve—I am perplexed—I am sad—and a little thing—a very trifle—would make me weep—but for the death of the baby I have *not* wept! Oh this strange, strange, strange scene-shifted Death!—that giddies one with insecurity and so unsubstantiates the living things that one has grasped and handled! Some months ago Wordsworth transmitted me a most sublime epitaph. Whether it had any reality I cannot say. Most probably, in some gloomier moment he had fancied the moment in which his sister might die.

EPITAPH

*A slumber did my spirit seal,
I had no human fears;
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.
No motion has she now, no force,
She neither hears nor sees:
Mov'd round in Earth's diurnal course
With rocks, and stones, and trees!*

49. . To Humphry Davy

Humphry Davy met Coleridge when he came to Bristol to carry out chemical researches at the Pneumatic Institution. Davy was interested also in philosophy and poetry, while Coleridge's speculative

mind ranged often within the territories of physiology and particularly the nature of sensations and their relation to the mind.

1800

January 1, 1800.

MY DEAR DAVY

Longman deems it best for you to publish a *Volume*, and be determined by the Nature of the Sale at what interval you will publish a second—the Volume of what size you find convenient, and you may of course begin printing when you like. All the tradesman part of the Business Longman will settle with Biggs and Cottle. I expected to have heard from Southey—tell him, I have seen Longman, and find him all willingness. But I could only speak in generals; and am waiting anxiously for the arrival of the first Books.

Davy! Davy! if the public Good did not iron and adamant you to Engl. and Bristol, what a little colony might we . . . not make. Tobin, I am sure, would go, and Wordsworth, and I—and Southey. Precious stuff for Dreams—and God knows, I have no time for them!

Questions—

On dipping my foot and leg into very hot water, the first sensation was identical with that of having dipped it into very cold. This identity recurred as often as I took my leg out in order to pour in the hot water from the kettle, and put it in again. How is this explained in philosophical Language divested of corpuscular Theories? Define Disgust in philosophical Language. Is it not, speaking as a materialist, always a stomach-sensation conjoined with an idea? What is the cause of that sense of cold, which accompanies inhalation, after having eat peppermint Drops?

If you don't answer me these, I'll send them to the Lady's Diary—where you may find fifty Questions of the same Depth and Kidney.

A Private Query—On our System of Death does it not

follow that killing a bad man might [do] him a great deal of Good? And that Buonaparte wants a gentle Dose of this kind, dagger or bullet ad libitum? I wish in your Researches that you and Beddoes would give a compact compressed History of the Human Mind for the last century, considered simply as to the acquisition of Ideas or new arrangement of them. Or if you won't do it there, do it for me—and I will print it with an Essay I am now writing on the principles of Population and Progressiveness.

Godwin talks evermore of you with lively affection—"What a pity that such a man should degrade his vast Talents to Chemistry," cried he to me—Why, quoth I, how, Godwin! can you thus talk of a science, of which neither you nor I understand an iota etc., etc.; and I defended Chemistry as knowingly at least as Godwin attacked it -affirmed that it united the opposite advantages of immaterializing the mind without destroying the definiteness of the Ideas--nay even while it gave clearness to them—and eke that being necessarily per[formed] with the passion of Hope, it was . . . and we both agreed (for G., as well as I, thinks himself a Poet) that *the Poet* is the greatest possible character etc., etc. Modest Creatures! Hurra, my dear Southey!—you [and I] and Godwin, and Shakespeare, and Milton, with what an athanasiophagous grin we shall march together- *we poets*: Down with all the rest of the World!--By the word athanasiophagous I mean devouring Immortality by anticipation! 'Tis a sweet word!—

God bless you, my dear Davy! Take my nonsense like a pinch of snuff - sneeze it off, it clears the head -and to Sense and yourself again—with most affectionate esteem

Your's ever

S. T. COLERIDGE.

50. To Humphry Davy

Greta Hall, Keswick, Cumberland, 1800

Friday Evening, July 25, 1800.

. . . We drank tea the night before I left Grasmere, on the Island in that lovely lake, our kettle swung over the fire hanging from the branch of a Fir-tree, and I lay and saw the woods, and mountains, and lake all trembling, and as it were *idealized* thro' the subtle smoke which rose up from the clear red embers of the fir-apples, which we had collected; afterwards, we made a glorious Bonfire on the margin, by some elder bushes, whose twigs heaved and sobbed in the up-rushing column of smoke;—and the Image of the Bonfire, and of us that danced round it—ruddy laughing faces in the twilight—the Image of this in a Lake smooth as that sea, to whose waves the Son of God had said, *Peace!* . . .

51. To William Godwin

Monday [Sept., 1800.]

DEAR GODWIN,

There are vessels every week from Dublin to Workington which place is 16 miles from my house, through a divine country, but these are idle regrets. I know not the nature of your present pursuits, whether or no they are such as to require the vicinity of large and curious libraries. If you were engaged in any work of imagination or reasoning, not biographical not historical, I should repeat and urge my invitation after my wife's confinement. Our house is situated on a rising ground, not two furlongs from Keswick, about as much from the Lake Derwentwater, and about two miles from the Lake Bassenthwaite—both lakes and mountains ~~at~~ command. The river Greta runs behind our house, and before it too, and

Skiddaw is behind us—not half a mile distant indeed just distant enough to enable us to view it as a Whole. The garden, orchard, fields and immediate country all delightful. I have, or have the use of, no inconsiderable collection of books. In *my* Library you will find all the Poets and Philosophers, and many of the best old writers. Below, in our parlour, belonging to our landlord, but in my possession, are almost all the usual trash of Johnsons, Gibbons, Robertsons, etc., with the Encyclopædia Britannica, etc. Sir Wilfred Lawson's magnificent library is some eight or nine miles distant, and he is liberal in the highest degree in the management of it. And now for your letter. I swell out my chest and place my hand on my heart, and swear aloud to all that you *have* written, or shall write, against lawyers and the practice of the law. When you next write so eloquently and so well against it, or against anything, be so good as to leave a larger space for your wafer; as by neglect of this, a part of your last was obliterated. The character of Curran, which you have sketched most ably, is a frequent one in its moral essentials, though, of course among the most rare, if we take it with all its intellectual accompaniments. Whatever I have read of Curran's, has impressed me with a deep conviction of his genius. Are not the Irish in general a more eloquent race than we? Of North Wales my recollections are faint, and as to Wicklow I only know from the newspapers that it is a mountainous country. As far as my memory will permit me to decide on the grander parts of Carnarvonshire, I may say that the single objects are superior to any which I have seen elsewhere, but there is a deficiency in combination. I know of no mountain in the North equal to Snowdon, but then we have an encampment of huge mountains, in no harmony perhaps to the eye of the mere painter, but always interesting, various and, as it were nutritive. Height is assuredly an advantage, as it connects the earth with the sky, by the clouds that are ever skimming the summits or climbing up, or

creeping down the sides, or rising from the chasm, like smoke from a cauldron, or veiling or bridging the higher parts or lower parts of waterfalls. That you were less impressed by North Wales I can easily believe; it is possible that the scenes of Wicklow may be superior, but it is certain that you were in a finer irritability of spirit to enjoy them. The first pause and silence after a return from a very interesting visit is somewhat connected with langour in all of us. Besides, as you have observed, mountains and mountainous scenery taken collectively and cursorily, must depend for their charms on their novelty. They put on their immortal interest then first, when we have resided among them, and learnt to understand their language, their written character and intelligible sounds, and all their eloquence, so various, so unwearied. Then you will hear no "twice-told tale". I question if there be a room in England which commands a view of mountains, and lakes, and woods and vales superior to that in which I am now sitting. I say this, because it is destined for your study, if you come. You are kind enough to say that you feel yourself more natural and unreserved with me than with others. I suppose that this in great measure arises from my own ebullient unreservedness. Something, too, I will hope may be attributed to the circumstance that my affections are deeply interested in my opinions. But here, too, you will meet with Wordsworth, "the latchet of whose shoes I am unworthy to unloose," and five miles from Wordsworth Charles Lloyd has taken a house. Wordsworth is publishing a second volume of the "Lyrical Ballads," which title is to be dropped, and his "Poems" substituted. Have you seen Sheridan since your return? How is it with your tragedy? Were you in town when Miss Bayley's tragedy was represented? How was it that it proved so uninteresting? Was the fault in the theatre, the audience, or the play? It must have excited a deeper feeling in you than that of mere curiosity, for doubtless the tragedy has great merit. Have you read the

1800

1800 "Wallenstein"? Prolix and crowded and dragging as it is, it is yet quite a model for its judicious management of the sequence of the scenes, and such it is held in German theatres. Our English acting plays are many of them woefully deficient in this part of the dramatic trade and mystery.

Hartley is well, and all life and action—Yours with unfeigned esteem,

S. T. COLERIDGE.


Kisses for Mary and Fanny. God love them. I wish you would come and look out for a house for yourself here. You know "I wish" is privileged to have something silly to follow it.

52. To Sir H. Davy

October 18, 1800.

MY DEAR DAVY,

Our mountains northward end in the mountain Carrock,—one huge, steep, enormous bulk of stones, desolately variegated with the heath plant; at its foot runs the river Calder, and a narrow vale between it and the mountain Bowscale, so narrow, that in its greatest width it is not more than a furlong. But that narrow vale is *so* green, *so* beautiful, there are moods in which a man might weep to look at it. On this mountain Carrock, at the summit of which are the remains of a vast Druid circle of stones, I was wandering, when a thick cloud came on, and wrapped me in such darkness that I could not see ten yards before me, and with the cloud a storm of wind and hail, the like of which I had never before seen and felt. At the very summit is a cone of stones, built by the shepherds, and called the Carrock Man. Such cones are on the tops of almost all our mountains, and they are all called *men*. At the bottom of the Carrock Man I seated myself for shelter, but the wind became so fearful and tyrannous, that I was

apprehensive some of the stones might topple down upon me, so I groped my way farther down and came to three rocks, placed on this wise, ¹  ², each one supported by the other like a child's house of cards, and in the hollow and screen which they made I sat for a long while sheltered, as if I had been in my own study in which I am now writing: there I sat with a total feeling worshipping the power and "eternal link" of energy. The darkness vanished as by enchantment; far off, far, far off to the south, the mountains of Glaramara and Great Gable and their family appeared distinct, in deepest, sablest *blue*. A rose, and behind me was a rainbow bright as the brightest. I descended by the side of a torrent, and passed, or rather crawled (for I was forced to descend on all fours), by many a naked waterfall, till, fatigued and hungry (and with a finger almost broken, and which remains swelled to the size of two fingers), I reached the narrow vale, and the single house nestled in ash and sycamores. I entered to claim the universal hospitality of this country; but instead of the life and comfort usual in these lonely houses, I saw dirt, and every appearance of misery—a pale woman sitting by a peat fire. I asked her for bread and milk, and she sent a small child to fetch it, but did not rise herself. I eat very heartily of the black, sour bread, and drank a bowl of milk, and asked her to permit me to pay her. "Nay," says she, "we are not so scant as that—you are right welcome; but do you know any help for the rheumatics, for I have been so long ailing that I am almost fain to die?" So I advised her to eat a great deal of mustard, having seen in an advertisement something about essence of mustard curing the most obstinate cases of rheumatism. But do write me, and tell me some cure for the rheumatism; it is in her shoulders, and the small of her back chiefly. I wish much to go off with some bottles of stuff to the poor creature. I should walk the ten miles as ten yards. With love and honour, my dear Davy,

Yours,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

53. To Sir H. Davy

1800

Greta Hall, Tuesday night,

December 2, 1800.

. . . Did Carlisle ever communicate to^f you, or has he in any way published his facts concerning *pain* which he mentioned when we were with him? It is a subject which *exceedingly interests* me. I want to read something by somebody expressly on *pain*, if only to give an *arrangement* to my own thoughts, though if it were ^{well} treated I have little doubt it would revolutionize them. For the last month I have been trembling on through sands and swamps of evil and bodily grievance. My eyes have been inflamed to a degree that rendered reading and writing scarcely possible; and, strange as it seems, the act of metre composition, as I lay in bed, perceptibly affected "and my voluntary ideas were every minute passing, them," less transformed into vivid spectra. I had leeches more orⁿ applied to my temples, and a blister behind my repeatedly y eyes are now my own, but in the place where the ear—and six small but excruciating boils have appeared, blister^owas, ne almost beyond endurance . . . and harass^rl

To Humphry Davy

54⁴

Jan. 11, 1801.

MY DEAR DAVY *s astraddle and bebolster'd back,*

With leg^y Alack! alack!

^u more than 3 weeks ago I walked to Gras-
 . . . Somewhat^o 'et thro'—I changed immediately—but still
 mere, and was w^t taken ill, and by the Lettre de cachet of a
 the next day I was^{Ca} sentenced to the Bed-bastille—the Fever left
 Rheumatic Fever s

me, and on Friday before last I was well enough to be conveyed home in a chaise—but immediately took to my bed again—a most excruciating pain on the least motion, but not without motion, playing Robespierre and Marat in my left Hip and the small of my back— . . . —yet still my animal spirits bear me up, tho' I am so weak, that even from sitting up to write this note to you, I seem to sink in upon myself in a ruin, like a column of Sand, informed and animated only by a Whirl-blast of the Desert. 1801

Pray, my dear Davy! did you rectify the red oil which rises over after the spirit of Hartshorn is gotten from the Horn so as to make that animal oil of Diphelius? and is it true what Hoffman asserts, that 15 or so drops will exert many times the power of opium both in degree and duration, without inducing any after fatigue?

You say W. "last poem is full of just pictures of what human life ought to be"—believe me, that such scenes and such characters really exist in this country—the superiority of the small Estates-men, such as W. paints in old Michael, is a God compared to our Peasants and small Farmers in the South: and furnishes important documents of the kindly ministrations of local attachment and hereditary descent. Success, my dear Davy! to Galvanism and every other ism and schism that you are about. Perge, dilectissime! et quantum potes (potes autem plurimum) rem publican humani generis juva. Videtur mihi saltem alios velle—te vero posse—Interea a Deo optumo maximo iterum atque iterum precor ut Davy meus Davy, meum cor, meum caput, mea spes altera, vivat, ut vivat dire [dive?] et feliciter! Tui amantissimus

S. T. COLERIDGE.

55. To Thomas Poole

1801

Monday, March 16, 1801.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The interval since my last letter has been filled up by me in the most intense study. If I do not greatly delude myself, I have not only *completely extricated the notions of time and space*, but have overthrown the doctrine of association, as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern infidel.—especially the doctrine of necessity. This I have *done*; but I trust that I am about to do more—namely, that I shall be able to evolve all the five senses, that is, to deduce them from one sense, and to state their growth and the causes of their difference, and in this evolvment to solve the process of life and consciousness. *I write this to you only, and I pray you, mention what I have written to no one.* At Wordsworth's advice, or rather fervent entreaty, I have intermitted the pursuit. The intensity of thought, and the number of minute experiments with light and figure, have made me so nervous and feverish that I cannot sleep as long as I ought and have been used to do; and the sleep which I have is made up of ideas so connected, and so little different from the operations of reason, that it does not afford me the due refreshment. I shall therefore take a week's respite, and make "Christabel" ready for the press; which I shall publish by itself, in order to get rid of all my engagements with Longman. My German Book I have suffered to remain suspended chiefly because the thoughts which had employed my sleepless nights during my illness were imperious over me; and though poverty was staring me in the face, yet I dared behold my image miniaturized in the pupil of her hollow eye, so steadily did I look her in the face; for it seemed to me a suicide of my very soul to divert my attention from truths so important, which came to me almost as a revelation. Likewise, I cannot express to you, dear Friend

of my heart! the loathing which I once or twice felt when I attempted to write, merely for the bookseller, without any sense of the moral utility of what I was writing. I shall therefore, as I said, immediately publish my "Christabel," with two essays annexed to it, on the "Preternatural" and on "Metre."— This done, I shall propose to Longman, instead of my Travels (which, though nearly done, I am exceedingly anxious not to publish, because it brings me forward in a *personal* way, as a man who relates little adventures of himself to *amuse* people, and thereby exposes me to sarcasm and the malignity of anonymous critics, and is, besides, *beneath me* . . .) I shall propose to Longman to accept instead of these Travels a work on the originality and merits of Locke, Hobbes, and Hume, which work I mean as a *pioneer* to my greater work, and as exhibiting a proof that I have not formed opinions without an attentive perusal of the works of my predecessors, from Aristotle to Kant . . .

1801

56. To Thomas Poole

Monday March 23, 1801.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your kind letter of the 14th. I was agreeably disappointed in finding that you had been interested in the letter respecting Locke. Those which follow are abundantly more entertaining and important; but I have no one to transcribe them. Nay, three letters are written which have not been sent to Mr. Wedgwood, because I have no one to transcribe them for me, and I do not wish to be without copies. Of that letter which you have I have no copy. It is somewhat unpleasant to me that Mr. Wedgwood has not answered my

letter requesting his opinion of the utility of such a work, nor acknowledged the receipt of the long letter containing the evidences that the whole of Locke's system, as far as it was a system, and with the exclusion of those parts only which have been given up *as absurdities* by his warmest admirers, pre-existed in the writings of Descartes, in a far more pure, elegant, and delightful form. Be not afraid that I shall join the party of the *Little-ists*. I believe that I shall delight you by the detection of their artifices. *Now Mr. Locke was the founder of this sect, himself a perfect Little-ist.*

My opinion is thus: that deep thinking is attainable only by a man of deep feeling, and that all truth is a species of revelation. The more I understand of Sir Isaac Newton's works, the more boldly I dare utter to my own mind, and therefore to *you*, that I believe the souls of five hundred Sir Isaac Newtons would go to the making up of a Shakespeare or a Milton. But if it please the Almighty to grant me health, hope, and a steady mind (always the three clauses of my hourly prayers), before my thirtieth year I will thoroughly understand the whole of Newton's works. At present I must content myself with endeavouring to make myself entire master of his easier work, that on Optics. I am exceedingly delighted with the beauty and neatness of his experiments, and with the accuracy of his *immediate* deductions from them; but the opinions founded on these deductions, and indeed his whole theory is, I am persuaded, so exceedingly superficial as without impropriety to be deemed false. Newton was a mere materialist. *Mind*, in his system, is always *passive*,—a lazy *Looker-on* on an external world. If the mind be not *passive*, if it be indeed made in God's Image, and that, too, in the sublimest sense, the *Image of the Creator*, there is ground for suspicion that any system built on the passiveness of the mind must be false, as a system. I need not observe, my dear friend, how unutterably silly and contemptible these opinions would be if written to any but to

another self. I assure you, solemnly assure you, that you and Wordsworth are the only men on earth to whom I would have uttered a word on this subject

1801

57. To Robert Southey

Oct 21 1801—The day after my birthday—29 years of age!
Who on earth can say that without a sigh!

DEAR SOUTHEY,

You did not stay long enough with us to *love* the mountains and this wonderful vale—Yesterday the snow fell—and today—O that you were here—I odore full—the mountains snow-crested, misty, howling weather! After your arrival I move southward in the hopes that warm rooms and deep tranquillity may build me up anew, and that I may be able to return in the Spring without the necessity of going abroad. I propose to go with you and Edith to London and then to Stowey—or Wedgwood's as circumstances direct. My knee is no longer swollen, and this frosty weather agrees with me—but O Friend! I am sadly shattered. The least agitation brings on bowel complaints, and within the last week *twice* with an ugly symptom—namely of sickness even to vomiting—and Sara—alas! we are not suited to each other. But the months of my absence I devote to *self-discipline*, and to the attempt to draw her nearer to me by a regular development of all the sources of our unhappiness—then for another trial *fair* as I hold the love of good men dear to me—*patient* as I myself love my own dear children. I will go believing that it will end happily—if not, if our mutual unsuitableness continues, and (as it assuredly will do, if it continue) increases and strengthens—why then, it is better for her and my children that I should live apart, than

1801 that she should be a widow and they orphans. Carefully have I *thought thro'* the subject of marriage and deeply am I convinced of its indissolubleness. If I separate, I do it in the earnest desire to provide for her and them, that while I live she may enjoy the comforts of life and that when I die, something may have been accumulated that may secure her from degrading dependence. When I least love her, then most do I feel anxiety for her peace, comfort and welfare. Is she not the mother of my children? And am I the man not to know and feel this? Enough of this . . .

I do agree with you that chemistry tends in its present state to turn its priests into sacrifices. The way in which it does it (this however is an opinion that would make Rickman laugh at me if you told it to him) is this—it prevents or tends to prevent a young man from falling in love. We all have obscure feelings, that must be connected with something or other—the miser with a guinea—Lord Nelson with a blue ribbon, Wordsworth's old Molly with her washing tub—Wordsworth with the hills, Lakes and trees, (all men are poets in their way, tho' for the most part their ways are *dammèd bad ones*). Now Chemistry makes a young man associate these feelings with inanimate objects—and that without any moral revulsion, but on the contrary with complete self-approbation, and his distant views of benevolence or his sense of immediate beneficences attach themselves either to man as the whole human race, or to man, as a sick man, as a painter, as a manufacturer, etc., and in no way to man as a husband, son, brother, daughter, wife, friend, etc., etc. That to be in love is simply to confine the feelings prospective of animal enjoyment to one woman is a gross mistake—it is to associate a large proportion of all our obscure feelings with a real form. A miser is *in love* with a guinea, and a virtuous young man with a woman, in the same sense without figure or metaphor. A young poet may do without being in love with a woman—it is enough if he loves—

but to a young chemist it would be salvation to be downright romantically in love—and unfortunately so far from the poison and antidote growing together, they are like the wheat and 1802
Barberry . . .

58. To Mrs. S. T. Coleridge

This fragment is all that remains of the original letter.

[1802.]

. . .

—as to what is thought or said of me by persons, whom I do not particularly esteem or love, and by whom I am not esteemed or loved 4. An independence of, and contempt for, all advantages of external fortune, that are not immediately connected with bodily comforts, or moral pleasures I love warm Rooms, comfortable fires, and food, books, natural scenery, music, etc; but I do not care what *binding* the Books have, whether they are dusty or clean—and I *dislike* fine furniture handsome cloathes, and all the ordinary symbols and appendages of artificial superiority—or what is call'd, *Gentility* In the same spirit, I dislike, at least I seldom like, Gentlemen, gentlemanly manners, etc I have no Pride, as far as Pride means a desire to be *thought* highly of by others—if I have any sort of Pride, it consists in *an indolent* . . . So much for myself—and now I will endeavour to give a short sketch of what appears to be the nature of your character As I seem to exist, as it were, almost wholly within myself, in *thoughts* rather than in *things*, in a particular warmth felt *all* over me, but chiefly felt about my head and breast, and am connected with *things without* me by the pleasurable sense of their immediate Beauty or Loveliness, and not at all by my knowledge of the average value in the minds of people in general, and with *persons without* me, by no ambition of their esteem, or of having rank

1802 and consequence in their minds, but with people in general by general kindliness of feeling, and with my especial friends, by an intense delight in fellow-feeling, by an intense perception of the Necessity of *Like to Like*; so you on the contrary exist almost wholly in the world *without* you—the Eye and the Ear are your great organs, and you depend upon the eyes and ears of others for a great part of your pleasures . . .

59^r To W. Sotheby

Greta Hall, Keswick, Tuesday, July 13, 1802.

. . . I was much pleased with your description of Wordsworth's character as it appeared to you. It is in a few words, in half a dozen strokes, like one of Mortimer's* figures, a fine portrait. The word 'homogeneous' gave me great pleasure, as most accurately and happily expressing him. I must set you right with regard to my perfect coincidence with his poetic creed. It is most certain that the heads of our mutual conversations, etc., and the passages, were indeed partly taken from note of mine; for it was at first intended that the preface should be written by me. And it is likewise true that I warmly accord with Wordsworth in his abhorrence of these poetic licenses, as they are called, which are indeed mere tricks of convenience and laziness. *Ex. gr.* Drayton has these lines:—

*"Ouse having Ouleney past, as she were waxed mad'
From her first stayer course immediately doth gad,
And in meandered gyres doth whirl herself about,
That, this way, here and there, backward in and out.
And like a wanton girl oft doubling in her gait
In labyrinthian turns and twinings intricate,"*

etc.

* John Hanilton Mortimer, 1741–79, painter of historical subjects.

The first poets, observing such a stream as this, would say with truth and beauty, "it *strays*"; and now every stream shall *stray*, wherever it prattles on its *pebbled way*, instead of its bed or channel. And I have taken the instance from a poet from whom as few instances of this vile, commonplace, trashy style could be taken as from any writer [namely], from Bowles' execrable translation of that lovely poem of Dean Ogle's* (vol. ii, p. 27). I am confident that Bowles good-naturedly translated it in a hurry, merely to give him an excuse for printing the admirable original. In my opinion, every phrase, every metaphor, every personification, should have its justifying clause in some *passion*, either of the poet's mind or of the characters described by the poet. But metre itself implies a passion, that is, a state of excitement both in the poet's mind, and is expected, in part, of the reader; and, though I stated this to Wordsworth, and he has in some sort stated it in his preface, yet he has not done justice to it, nor has he, in my opinion, sufficiently answered it. In my opinion, poetry justifies as poetry, independent of any other passion, some new combinations of language and *constructions*, the omission of many others allowable in other compositions. Now Wordsworth, *ne saltem iudice*, has in his system not sufficiently admitted the former, and in his practice has too frequently sinned against the latter. Indeed, we have had lately some little controversy on the subject, and we begin to suspect that there is somewhere or other a radical difference in our opinions. *Utile est inter amicos rarissimè dissensione condere plurimas consentiones*, saith St. Augustine, who said more good things than any saint or sinner that I ever read in Latin . . .

60. To Robert Southey

1802

Greta Hall, Keswick, July 29, 1802.

. . . But I will apprise you of one thing, that although Wordsworth's Preface is half a child of my own brain, and arose out of conversations so frequent that, with few exceptions, we could scarcely either of us, perhaps, positively say which first started any particular thought (I am speaking of the Preface as it stood in the second volume), yet I am far from going all lengths with Wordsworth. He has written lately a number of Poems (thirty-two in all), some of them of considerable length (the longest one hundred and sixty lines), the greater number of these, to my feelings, very excellent compositions, but here and there a daring humbleness of language and versification, and a strict adherence to matter of fact, even to prolixity, that startled me. His alterations, likewise, in "Ruth" perplexed me, and I have thought and thought again, and have not had my doubts solved by Wordsworth. On the contrary, I rather suspect that somewhere or other there is a radical difference in our theoretical opinions respecting poetry; this I shall endeavour to go to the bottom of, and, acting the arbitrator between the old school and the new school, hope to lay down some plain and perspicuous, though not superficial canons of criticism respecting poetry. What an admirable definition Milton gives, quite in an "obiter" way, when he says of poetry, that it is "*simple, sensuous, passionate*." It truly comprises the whole that can be said on the subject. In the new edition of the L. Ballads there is a valuable appendix, which I am sure you must like, and in the Preface itself considerable additions; one on the dignity and nature of the office and character of a Poet, that is very grand, and of a sort of Verulamian power and majesty, but it is, in parts (and this is the fault, *me judice*, of all the latter half of that Preface), obscure beyond any necessity, and the extreme elaboration and almost constrainedness of the

diction contrasted (to my feelings) somewhat harshly with the general style of the Poems, to which the Preface is an introduction . . .

1802

Having written these lines, I rejoice for you as well as for myself, that I am able to inform you, that now for a long time there has been more love and concord in my house than I have known for years before. I had made up my mind to a very awful step, though the struggles of my mind were so violent, that my sleep became the valley of the shadows of Death and my health was in a state truly alarming. It did alarm Mrs. Coleridge. The thought of separation wounded her pride,—she was fully persuaded that deprived of the society of my children and living abroad without any friends I should pine away, and the fears of widowhood came upon her, and though these feelings were wholly selfish, yet they made her *serious*, and that was a great point gained. For Mrs. Coleridge's mind has very little that is *bad* in it; it is an innocent mind; but it is light and *unimpressible*, warm in anger, cold in sympathy, and in all disputes uniformly *projects itself forth* to recriminate, instead of turning itself inward with a silent self-questioning. Our virtues and our vices are exact antitheses. I so attentively watch my own nature that my worst self-delusion is a complete self-knowledge so mixed with intellectual complacency, that my quickness to see and readiness to acknowledge my faults is too often frustrated by the small pain which the sight of them gives me, and the consequent slowness to amend them. Mrs. C. is so stung with the very first thought of being in the wrong, because she never endures to look at her own mind in all its faulty parts, but shelters herself from painful self-inquiry by angry recrimination. Never, I suppose, did the stern match-maker bring together two minds so utterly contrariant in their primary and organical constitution. Alas! I have suffered more, I think, from the amiable propensities of my nature than from my worst faults and most erroneous habits, and I have suffered

1802 much from both. But, as I said, Mrs. Coleridge was made *serious*, and for the first time since our marriage she felt and acted as becomed a wife and a mother to a husband and the father of her children. She promised to set about an alteration in her external manners and looks and language, and to fight against her inveterate habits of puny thwarting and unintermitting dyspathy, this immediately, and to do her best endeavours to cherish other feelings. I, on my part, promised to be more attentive to all her feelings or pride, etc., etc., and to try to correct my habits of impetuous censure. We have both kept our promises, and she has found herself so much more happy than she had been for years before, that I have the most confident hopes that this happy revolution in our domestic affairs will be permanent, and that this external conformity will gradually generate a greater inward likeness of thoughts and attachments than has hitherto existed between us. Believe me, if you were here, it would give you a *deep* delight to observe the difference of our minutely conduct towards each other, from that which, I fear, could not but have disturbed your comfort when you were here last.

61. To W. Sotheby

Greta Hall, Keswick, September 10, 1802.

. . . A poet's heart and intellect should be *combined*, intimately combined and unified with the great appearances of nature, and not merely held in solution and loose mixture with them, in the shape of formal similes. I do not mean to exclude these formal similes; there are moods of mind in which they are natural, pleasing moods of mind, and such as a poet will often have, and sometimes express; but they are not his highest and most appropriate moods. They are "*sermoni propria*,"

which I once translated "properer for a sermon." The truth is, Bowles has indeed the *sensibility* of a poet, but he has not the *passion* of a great poet. His latter writings all want *native* passion. 1802 Milton here and there supplies him with an appearance of it, but he has no *native* passion because he is not a thinker, and has probably weakened his intellect by the haunting fear of becoming extravagant. Young, somewhere in one of his prose works, remarks that there is as profound a logic in the most daring and dithyrambic parts of Pindar as in the "Organon" of Aristotle. The remark is a valuable one.

*Poetic feelings, like the flexuous boughs
Of mighty oaks! yield homage to the gale,
Toss in the strong winds, drive before the gust,
Themselves one giddy storm of fluttering leaves;
Yet, all the while, self-limited, remain
Fixed near the fix'd and parent trunk
Of truth in nature—in the howling blast,
As in the calm that stills the aspen grove.*

That this is deep in our nature, I felt when I was on Scafell. I involuntarily poured forth a hymn in the manner of the Psalms, though afterwards I thought the ideas, etc., disproportionate to our humble mountains . . . You will soon see it in the "Morning Post," and I should be glad to know whether and how far it pleased you. It has struck me with great force lately that the Psalms afford a most complete answer to those who state the Jehovah of the Jews, as a personal and national God, and the Jews as differing from the Greeks only in calling the minor Gods Cherubim and Seraphim, and confining the word "God" only to their Jupiter. It must occur to every reader that the Greeks in their religious poems address always the Numina Loci, the Genii, the Dryads, the Naiads, etc., etc. All natural objects were *dead*, mere hollow statues, but there was a Godkin or Goddessling *included* in

each. In the Hebrew poetry you find nothing of this poor stuff, as poor in genuine imagination as it is mean in intellect. At best, it is but fancy, or the aggregating faculty of the mind, not imagination or the *modifying* and coadunating faculty. This the Hebrew poets appear to me to have possessed beyond all others, and next to them the English. In the Hebrew poets each thing has a life of its own, and yet they are all our life. In God they move and live and *have* their being; not *had*, as the cold system of Newtonian Theology represents, but *have*. Great pleasure indeed, my dear sir, did I receive from the latter part of your letter. If there be any two subjects which have in the very depths of my nature interested me, it has been the Hebrew and Christian Theology, and the Theology of Plato. Last winter I read the Parmenides and the Timæus with great care, and oh, that you were here—even in this howling rainstorm that dashes itself against my windows—on the other side of my blazing fire, in that great armchair there! I guess we should encroach on the morning ere we parted. How little the commentators of Milton have availed themselves of the writings of Plato, Milton's darling! But alas, commentators only hunt out verbal parallelisms—*numen abest*. I was much impressed with this in all the many notes on that beautiful passage in "Comus" from 1. 629 to 641. All the puzzle is to find out what plant Haemony is; which they discover to be the English spleenwort, and decked out as a mere play and licence of poetic fancy with all the strange properties suited to the purpose of the drama. They thought little of Milton's platonizing spirit, who wrote nothing without an interior meaning. "Where more is meant than meets the ear," is true of himself beyond all writers. He was so great a man that he seems to have considered fiction as profane unless where it is consecrated by being emblematic of some truth. What an unthinking and ignorant man we must have supposed Milton to be, if, without any hidden meaning, he had described it as grow-

ing in such abundance that the dull swain treads on it daily, and yet as never *flowering*. Such blunders Milton of all others was least likely to commit. Do look at the passage. Apply it as an allegory of Christianity, or, to speak more precisely, of the Redemption by the Cross, every syllable is full of light! "*A small unsightly root.*"—"To the Greeks folly, to the Jews a stumbling-block"—"*The leaf was darkish and had prickles on it*"—"If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most miserable," and a score of other texts. "*But in another country, as he said, Bore a bright golden flower*"—"The exceeding weight of glory prepared for us hereafter"—"*But not in this soil; Unknown and like esteemed and the dull swain Treads on it daily with his clouded shoon*"—The promises of Redemption offered daily and hourly, and to all, but accepted scarcely by any—"He called it *Ilamony*." Now what is *Ilamony*? αἶμα οἶνου, Blood-wine. "And he took the wine and blessed it and said, 'This is my Blood,'"—the great symbol of the Death on the Cross. There is a general ridicule cast on all allegorising of poets. Read Milton's prose works, and observe whether he was one of those who joined in this ridicule. There is a very curious passage in Josephus [De Bello Jud. 6, 7, cap. 25 (vi. § 3)] which is, in its literal meaning, more wild and fantastically absurd than the passage in Milton; so much so, that Lardner quotes it in exultation and says triumphantly, "Can any man who reads it think it any disparagement to the Christian Religion that it was not embraced by a man who would believe such stuff as this? God forbid that it should affect Christianity, that it is not believed by the learned of this world!" But the passage in Josephus, I have no doubt, is wholly allegorical.

Εστησε signifies "He hath stood," which, in these times of apostasy from the principles of freedom or of religion in this country, and from both by the same persons in France, is no unmeaning signature, if subscribed with humility, and in the

remembrance of "Let him that stands take heed lest he fall!"
However, it is, in truth, no more than S.T.C. written in Greek
1802 —Es tee see.

Pocklington will not sell his house, but he is ill, and perhaps
it may be to be sold, but it is sunless all winter.

God bless you, and

S. T. COLERIDGE.

62. To W. Sotheby

Greta Hall, Keswick, Tuesday,

September 27, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR,

The river is full, and Lodore is full, and silver-fillets come out
of clouds and glitter in every ravine of all the mountains; and
the hail lies like snow, upon their tops, and the impetuous
gusts from Borrowdale snatch the water up high, and con-
tinually at the bottom of the lake it is not distinguishable
from snow slanting before the wind—and under this seeming
snow-drift the sunshine *gleams*, and over all the nether half of
the Lake it is *bright* and *dazzles*, a cauldron of melted silver
boiling! It is in very truth a sunny, misty, cloudy, dazzling,
howling, omniform day, and I have been looking at as pretty
a sight as a father's eyes could well see—Hartley and little
Derwent running in the green where the gusts blow most
madly, both with their hair floating and tossing, a miniature
of the agitated trees, below which they were playing, inebriate
both with the pleasure—Hartley whirling round for joy,
Derwent eddying, half-willingly, half by the force of the
gust,—driven backward, struggling forward, and shouting
his little hymn of joy . . .

63. To Tom Wedgwood

Greta Hall, Keswick, 1802

October 20, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR,

This is my Birthday, my thirtieth. It will not appear wonderful to you therefore, when I tell you that before the arrival of your Letter I had been thinking with a great weight of different feelings concerning you and your dear Brother. For I have good reason to believe, that I should not now have been alive, if in addition to other miseries I had had immediate poverty pressing upon me. I will never again remain silent so long. It has not been altogether Indolence or my habits of Procrastination which have kept me from writing, but an eager wish, I may truly say, a Thirst of Spirit, to have something honorable to tell you of myself— At present I must be content to tell you something cheerful. My Health is very much better. I am stronger, in every respect: and am not injured by study or the act of sitting at my writing Desk. But my eyes suffer if at any time I have been intemperate in the use of Candle-light. This account supposes another, namely, that my mind is calm and more at ease. My dear Sir! when I was last with you at Stowey, my heart was often full, and I could scarcely keep from communicating to you the tale of my distresses. But how could I add to your depression, when you were so low? Or how interrupt, or cast a shade on your good spirits, that were so rare and so precious to you? After my return to Keswick, I was, if possible, more miserable than before. Scarce a day passed without such a scene of discord between me and Mrs. Coleridge, as quite incapacitated me for any worthy exertion of my faculties by degrading me in my own estimation. I found my temper impaired, and daily more so; the good and pleasurable thoughts, which had been the

1802 support of my moral character, departed from my solitude. I determined to go abroad—but alas! the less I loved my wife, the more dear and necessary did my children seem to me. I found no comfort except in the driest speculations—In the Ode to Dejection, which you were pleased with, these lines in the original followed the line—My shaping spirit of Imagination—

*“For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can,
And haply by abstruse Research to steal
From my own Nature all the natural man—
This was my sole resource, my only plan,
And that which suits a part infects the whole
And now is almost grown the Temper of my Soul.”*

I give you these lines for the Truth and not for the Poetry. However about two months ago after a violent quarrel I was taken suddenly ill with spasms in my stomach—I expected to die—Mrs. C. was, of course, shocked and frightened beyond measure—and two days after, I being still very weak and pale as death, she threw herself upon me, and made a solemn promise of amendment—and she has kept her promise beyond any hope, I could have flattered myself with: and I have reason to believe, that two months of tranquillity, and the sight of my now not colourless and cheerful countenance, have really made her feel as a Wife ought to feel. If any woman wanted an exact and copious Recipe, “How to make a Husband completely miserable,” I could her furnish with one—with a *Probatum est*, tacked to it. Ill-tempered Speeches sent after me when I went out of the House, ill-tempered Speeches on my return, my friends received with freezing looks, the least opposition or contradiction occasioning screams of passion, and the sentiments which I held most base, ostentatiously

avowed—all this added to the utter negation of all, which a Husband expects from a Wife—especially, living in retirement—and the consciousness that I was myself growing a worse man. O dear Sir! no one can tell what I have suffered. I can say with strict truth, that the happiest half-hours, I have had, were when all of a sudden, as I have been sitting alone in my Study I have burst into Tears . . . 1802

64. Mrs. S. T. Coleridge

*St. Clears, Carmarthen, Tuesday Morning,
½ past 5 !! Nov. 22, 1802.*

Be assured, my dear Love, that I shall never write otherwise than *most* kindly to you, except after great *aggressions* on your part; and not then, unless my reason convinces me that some good end will be answered by my reprehensions—My dear Love! let me in the spirit of Love say two things. 1. I owe duties, and solemn ones to you, as my wife, but some equally solemn ones to Myself, to my children, to my friends and to society. When duties are at variance dreadful as the case may be, there must be a choice. I can neither retain my happiness nor my faculties, unless I move, live and love in perfect freedom, limited only by my own purity and self-respect and by my incapability of loving any person, man or woman, unless at the same time I honor and esteem them. My love is made up of 9/10ths of fervent wishes for the permanent *peace* of mind of those whom I love, be it man or woman; and for their progression in purity, goodness, and true knowledge. Such being the nature of my love, no human being can have a right to be jealous. My nature is quick to love and retentive. Of those who are within the immediate sphere of my daily agency and bound to me by bonds of Nature or Neighbor-hood I shall

love each as they appear to me to deserve my love, and to be capable of returning it. More is not in my power. If I would do it, I could not. That we can love but one person is a miserable mistake and the cause of abundant unhappiness. I can and do love many people, dearly—so dearly, that I really scarcely know, which I love the best. Is it not so with every good mother who has a large number of children—and with many, many brothers and sisters in large and affectionate families? Why should it be otherwise with friends? Would any good and wise man, any warm and wide-hearted man marry at all, if it were part of the contract? Henceforth the woman is your only friend, the sole beloved! all the rest of mankind, however amiable and akin to you, must be only your acquaintance! It were well, if every woman wrote down before her marriage all, she thought, she had a *right* to from her husband and to examine each in this form. By what *Law* of God, of man, or of general reason, do I claim *this* right? I suspect, that this process would make a ludicrous quantity of blots and erasures in most of the first rude draughts of these Rights of Wives—infinitely however to their own advantage, and to the security of their true and genuine rights. 2. Permit me, my dear Sara, without offence to you, as Heaven knows! it is without any feeling of pride in myself, to say, that in six acquirements, and in the quantity and quality of natural endowments whether of feeling, or of intellect, you are the inferior. Therefore it would be preposterous to expect that I should see with your eyes, and dismiss my friends from my heart; but it is not preposterous in me, on the contrary I have a *right* to expect and demand that you should to a certain degree love and act kindly to those whom I deem worthy of my Love. If you read this letter with half the tenderness with which it is written, it will do you and both of us good . . . •

You know Sally Pally! I must have a joke or it would not be me!

Over frightful roads we at last arrived at Crescelly about 3 o'clock found a Captain and Mrs Tyler there (a stupid Brace) Jessica, Emma, and Frances Allen—All simple, good, kind-hearted lasses, and Jessie the eldest uncommonly so. We dined at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 4 just after dinner down came old Allen—(O Christ! Old Nightmare! An ancient Incubus! I very face was saddened, every mouth pursed up! Most solemnly civil, like the Lord of a stately castle 500 years ago! Dolcful and plaintive like for I believe that the Devil is twitching him home. After tea he left us, and went again to bed, and the whole party recovered their spirits. I drank nothing but I eat sweet meats, and cream and some fruit and talked a great deal and sat up till 12, and did not go to sleep till near 2. In consequence of which I rose sickish at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 my breakfast brought me about and all the way from Crescelly I was in a very pleasant state of feeling, but my feelings too tender, my thoughts too vivid. I was *deliciously* unwell. On my arrival at St Clearys, I received your letter, and had scarcely read it, before a fluttering of the heart came on, which ended (as usual) in a sudden and violent diarrhoea. I could scarcely touch my dinner and was obliged at last to take 20 drops of Laudanum which now that I have for 10 days left off all stimulus of all kinds, excepting 1 stid of a grain of opium at night, acted upon me more powerfully than 80 or 100 drops would have done at Keswick. I slept sound while I did sleep, but I am not *quite* well this morning, but I shall get round again in the course of the day. You must see by this, what absolute necessity I am under of *ducing* myself, and if possible, the still greater importance of *tranquility* to me.

All the woodcocks seems to have left the country. T Wedgwood's hopes and schemes are again all afloat—to-day we leave this place shall probably return to Crescelly and then God knows, where! Cornwall perhaps—Ireland perhaps—perhaps, Cumberland possibly Naples or Madeira,

1802 or Teneriffe. I do not see any likelihood of our going to the moon, or to either of the Planets, or fixed stars—and that is all, I can say. Write immediately my dear Lovel and direct to me—where? That's the puzzle—to be left at the Post Office Carmarthen. God bless you, my dear Lovel and speed me back to you, and our dear H. and D. *and etc.* Mr. T. Wedgwood desires his best respects to you—he is not come down—God bless you again and

S. T. COLERIDGE.

65. To The Rev. J. P. Estlin

Crescelly, near Narbarth, Pembrokeshire.

December 7, 1802.

. . . Have you heard lately from America? A gentleman informed me that the progress of religious Deism in the middle Provinces is exceedingly rapid, that there are numerous congregations of Deists, etc., etc. Would to Heaven this were the case in France! Surely, religious Deism is infinitely nearer the religion of our Saviour than the *gross* idolatry of Popery, or the more decorous, but not less genuine, idolatry of a vast majority of Protestants. If there be meaning in words, it appears to me that the Quakers and Unitarians are the only Christians, altogether pure from Idolatry, and even of these I am sometimes jealous, that some of the Unitarians make too much an *Idol* of their *one* God. Even the worship of one God becomes *Idolatry* in my convictions, when, instead of the Eternal and Omnipresent, in whom we live and move and have our Being, we set up a distinct Jehovah, tricked out in the *anthropomorphic* attributes of Time, and *successive* Thoughts, and think of him as a *Person*, from whom we had our Being. The tendency to *Idolatry* seems to me to lie at the root of all our

human vices—it is our original Sin. When we dismiss *three Persons* in the Deity, only by subtracting *two*, we talk more intelligibly, but, I fear, do not feel more religiously—for 1803
God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit . . .

66. To Thomas Wedgwood

Keswick, January 9, 1803.

. . . Before I was half up *Kirkstone* the storm had wetted me through and through, and before I reached the top of it was so wild and outrageous, that it would have been unmanly to have suffered the poor woman (guide) to continue pushing on, up against such a torrent of wind and rain; so I dismounted and sent her home with the storm to her back. I am no novice in mountain mischiefs, but such a storm as this was I never witnessed, combining the intensity of the cold with the violence of the wind and rain. The rain-drops were pelted or, rather, slung against my face by the gusts, just like splinters of flint, and I felt as if every drop *cut* my flesh. My hands were all shrivelled up like a washerwoman's, and so benumbed that I was obliged to carry my stick under my arm. Oh, it was a wild business! Such hurry-scurry of clouds, such volleys of sound! In spite of the wet and the cold, I should have had some pleasure in it but for two vexations: first, an almost intolerable pain came into my right eye, a *smarting* and *burning* pain; and secondly, in consequence of riding with such cold water under my seat, extremely uneasy and burthensome feelings attacked my groin, so that, what with the pain from the one, and the alarm from the other, I had *no enjoyment at all!*

Just at the brow of the hill I met a man dismounted, who could not sit on horseback. He seemed quite scared by the uproar, and said to me, with much feeling, "Oh, sir, it is a

perilous buffeting, but it is worse for you than for me, for I have it at my back." However I got safely over, and immediately, all was calm and breathless, as if it was some mighty fountain just on the summit of Kirkstone, that shot forth its volcano of air, and precipitated huge streams of invisible lava down the road to Patterdale.

57. To Robert Southey

Keswick, Wednesday, July 2, 1803.

. . . I have received great delight and instruction from *Scotus Erigena*. He is clearly the modern founder of the school of Pantheism; indeed he expressly defines the divine nature as *quæ fit et facit, et creat et creatur*; and repeatedly declares creation to be *manifestation*, the epiphany of philosophers. The eloquence with which he writes astonished me, but he had read more Greek than Latin, and was a Platonist rather than an Aristotelian. There is a good deal of *omne mens oculus* in the notion of the dark ages, etc., taken intensively; in extension it might be true. They had *nulli*: we are flooded ankle high: and what comes of it but grass rank or rotten? Our age eats from that poison-tree of knowledge yept "Too-Much and Too-Little." Have you read Paley's last book? Have you it to review? I could make a dashing review of it.

68. To Robert Southey

Keswick, Sunday, August 7, 1803.

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,

The last three days I have been fighting up against a restless wish to write to you. I am afraid lest I should infect you with my fears rather than furnish you with any new arguments, give you impulses rather than motives, and prick you with

spurs that had been dipped in the vaccine matter of my own cowardliness. While I wrote that last sentence, I had a vivid recollection, indeed an ocular spectrum, of our room in College Street, a curious instance of association. You remember how incessantly in that room I used to be compounding these half-verbal, half-visual metaphors. It argues, I am persuaded, a particular state of general feeling, and I hold that association depends in a much greater degree on the recurrence of resembling states of feeling, than on trains of ideas, that the recollection of early childhood in latest old age depends on and is explicable by this, and if this be true, Hartley's system totters. If I were asked how it is that very old people remember *visually* only the events of early childhood, and remember the intervening spaces either not at all or only verbally, I should think it a perfectly philosophical answer that old age remembers childhood by becoming "a second childhood!" This explanation will derive some additional value if you would look into Hartley's solution of the phenomena—how flat, how wretched! Believe me, Southey! a metaphysical solution, that does not instantly *tell* you something in the heart is grievously to be suspected as apocryphal. I almost think that ideas never recall ideas, as far as the *are* ideas, any more than leaves in a forest create each other's motion. The breeze it is that runs through them—it is the soul, the state of feeling. If I had said no *one* idea ever recalls another, I am confident that I could support the assertion . . .

1803

69. To Robert Southey

1803

Sunday, Aug. 14, 1803.

MY DEAR SOUTHEY

Your letter affected me very deeply. I did not feel it so much the two first days, as I have since done. I have been very ill, and in serious dread of a paralytic stroke in my whole left side. Of my disease there now remains no shade of doubt—it is a complete and almost heartless case of atonic Gout. If you would look at the article ‘Medicine’ in the Encycl. Brit: Vol., XI. Part I. No. 213, p. 181, and the first 5 paragraphs of the second column you will read almost the very words, in which before I had seen this article I had described my case to Wordsworth. The only non-agreement is—“an imaginary aggravation of the slightest feelings, and an apprehension of danger from them”. The first sentence is unphilosophically expressed—there is a state of mind, wholly unnoticed, as far as I know, by any physical or metaphysical writer hitherto, and yet which is necessary to the explanation of some of the most important phenomena of sleep and disease—it is a transmutation of the *succession* of time into the *juxtaposition* of space, by which the smallest impulses quickly and regularly recurrent aggregate themselves and attain a kind of visual magnitude with a correspondent intensity of general feeling. The simplest illustration would be the *circle* of Fire made by whirling round a live coal—only here the mind is passion. Suppose the same effect produced ab intra, and you have a clue to the whole mystery of frightful dreams and hypochondriacal delusions (I merely hint this, but I could detail the whole process complex as it is). Instead of an imaginary aggravation, etc., it would be better to say “an *aggregation* of slight feelings by the force of a decidedly retentive imagination.” As to the *apprehension* of danger—it

would belong to my disease if it could belong to me. But Sloth, carelessness, resignation in all things that have reference to mortal life is not merely *in* me, it is me . . .

1803

70. To His Wife

*Friday afternoon, 4 o'clock,
Sept. (1), [1803].*

MY DEAR SARA,

I write from the Ferry of Ballater . . . This is the first post since the day I left Glasgow. We went thence to Dumbarton (look at Stoddart's tour, where there is a very good view of Dumbarton Rock and Tower), thence to Loch Lomond, and a single house called Luss—horrible inhospitality and a fiend of a landlady! Thence eight miles up the Lake to E. Tarbet, where the lake is so like Ulsterwater that I could scarcely see the difference; crossed over the lake and by a desolate moorland walked to another lake, Loch Katrine, up to a place called Trossachs, the Borrowdale of Scotland, and the only thing which really beats us. You must conceive the Lake of Keswick pushing itself up a mile or two into Borrowdale, winding round Castle Crag, and in and out among all the nooks and promontories, and you must imagine all the mountains more *detachedly* built up, a general dislocation; every rock its own precipice, with trees young and old. This will give you some faint idea of the place, of which the character is extreme intricacy of effect produced by very simple means. One rocky, high island, four or five promontories, and a Castle Crag, just like that in the gorge of Borrowdale, but not so large. It rained all the way, all the long, long day. We slept in a hay-loft,—that is, Wordsworth, I, and a young man who came in at the Trossachs and joined us. Dorothy had a bed in the *hovel*, which was varnished *so rich* with peat smoke an apartment of highly

polished [oak] would have been poor to it—it would have wanted the metallic lustre of the smoke-varnished rafters.

1803 This was [the pleasantest] evening I had spent since my tour; for Wordsworth's hypochondriacal feelings keep him silent and self-centred. The next day it still was rain and rain; the ferry-boat was out for the preaching, and we stayed all day in the ferry wet to the skin. Oh, such a wretched hovel! But two Highland lassies, who kept house in the absence of the ferryman and his wife, were very kind, and one of them was beautiful as a vision, and put both Dorothy and me in mind of the Highland girl in William's "Peter Bell." We returned to E. Tarbet, I with the rheumatism in my head. And now William proposed to me to leave them and make my way on foot to Loch Katrine, the Trossachs, whence it is only twenty miles to Stirling, where the coach runs through to Edinburgh. He and Dorothy resolved to fight it out. I eagerly caught at the proposal; for the *sitting* in an open carriage in the rain is death to me, and somehow or other I had not been quite comfortable. So on Monday I accompanied them to Arrochar, on purpose to see the *Cobbler* which had impressed me so much in Mr. Wilkinson's drawings; and there I parted with them, having previously sent on all my things to Edinburgh by a Glasgow carrier who happened to be at E. Tarbet. The worst thing was the money. They took twenty-nine guineas, and I six—all our remaining cash. I returned to E. Tarbet; slept there that night; the next day walked to the very head of Loch Lomond to Glen Falloch, where I slept at a cottage-inn, two degrees below John Stanley's (but the good people were very kind),—meaning from hence to go over the mountains to the head of Loch Katrine again; but hearing from the gude man of the house that it was 40 miles to Glencoe (of which I had formed an idea from Wilkinson's drawings), and having found myself so happy alone (such blessing is there in perfect liberty!) I walked off. I have walked forty-five miles since

then, and, except during the last mile, I am sure I may say I have not met with ten houses. For eighteen miles there are but two habitations! and all that way I met no sheep, no cattle, 1803 only one goat! All through moorlands with huge mountains, some craggy and bare, but the most green, with deep pinky channels worn by torrents. Glencoe interested me, but rather disappointed me. There was no *superincumbency* of crag, and the crags not so bare or precipitous as I had expected. I am now going to cross the ferry for Fort William, for I have resolved to eke out my cash by all sorts of self-denial, and to walk along the *whole line of the Forts*. I am unfortunately shoeless; there is no town where I can get a pair, and I have no money to spare to buy them, so I expect to enter Perth barefooted. I burnt my shoes in drying them at the boatman's hovel on Loch Katrine, and I have by this means hurt my heel. Likewise my left leg is a little inflamed, and the rheumatism in the right of my head afflicts me sorely when I begin to grow warm in my bed, chiefly my right eye, ear, cheek, and the three teeth; but, nevertheless, I am enjoying myself, having Nature with solitude and liberty the liberty natural and solitary, the solitude natural and free! But you must contrive somehow or other to borrow ten pounds, or, if that cannot be, five pounds, for me, and send it without delay, directed to me at the Post Office, Perth. I guess I shall be there in seven days or eight at the furthest; and your letter will be two days getting thither (counting the day you put it into the office at Kew as nothing); so you must calculate, and if this letter does not reach you in time, that is, within five days from the date hereof, you must then direct to Edinburgh. I will make five pounds do (you must borrow of Mr. Jackson), and I must beg my way for the last three or four days! It is useless repining, but if I had set off myself in the Mail for Glasgow or Stirling, and so gone by foot, as I am now doing, I should have saved twenty-five pounds; but then Wordsworth would have lost it.

1803 I have said nothing of you or my dear children. God bless us all! I have but one untried misery to go through, the loss of Hartley or Derwent, ay, or dear little Sara. In my health I am middling. While I can walk twenty-four miles a day, with the excitement of new objects, I can *support* myself; but still my sleep and dreams are distressful, and I am hopeless. I take no opiates . . . nor have I any temptation; for since my disorder has taken this asthmatic turn opiates produce none but positively [unpleasant effects].

[No signature.]

Mrs. Coleridge,

Greta Hall, Keswick, Cumberland, S. Britain.

71. To Dr. Thomas Beddoes

Edinburgh.

Tuesday, [September] 13, 1803.

DEAR SIR

I have but even now, received your very obliging Letter, which comforted as well as amused me. I will give the medicine the fullest, and fairest Trial, yield the most implicit obedience to your Instructions, and add to both every possible attention to Diet and Exercise. My Disorder I believe to be atonic Gout: my sufferings are often sufficiently great by day, but by patience, effort of mind, and hard walking I can contrive to keep the Fiend at arm's length, as long as I am in possession of Reason and Will. But with Sleep my Horrors commence; and they are such; three nights out of four, as literally to *stun* the intervening Day, so that more often than otherwise I fall asleep, struggling to remain awake. Believe me, Sir! Dreams are no Shadows with me; but the real, substantial miseries of

Life. If in consequence of your Medicine I should be at length delivered from these sore visitations, my greatest uneasiness will then [be] how best and most fully I can evince my gratitude: should I commence Preacher, raise a new Sect in your honor—and make in short, a greater clamour in your favor, as the Anti-podagra, “that was to come, and is already in the world,” than even the Puritans did against the poor Pope, as the Antichrist—Hol all ye, who intreatingly come, and draw waters of Healing from the Wells of Salvation. This in my opinion I might say without impiety, for if to clear men’s body from Torture, Lassitude and Captivity, their understanding from mists and broodings, and their very hearts and souls from despair, if to enable them to go about their duty, steadily and quietly, to love God, and be chearful, if all this be not a work of Salvation, I would be informed, what is . . . 1803

72. To Tom Wedgwood,

Greta Hall, Keswick,

September 16, Friday [1803].

. . . William Hazlitt is a thinking, observant, original man, of great power as a Painter of Character Portraits, and far more in the manner of the old Painters, than any living Artist, but the objects must be *before* him; he has no imaginative memory. So much for his Intellectuals. His manners are to 99 in 100 singularly repulsive—: brow-hanging, shoe-contemplative, *strange*. Sharp seemed to like him; but Sharp saw him only for half an hour, and that walking—he is, I verily believe, kindly-natured—is very fond of, attentive to, and patient with, children; but he is jealous, gloomy, and of an *inextinguishable* Pride—and addicted to women, as objects of sexual Indulgence.

With all this, there is much good in him—he is disinterested, an enthusiastic lover of the great men, who have been before us—he says things that are his own in a way of his own—and tho’ from habitual Shyness and the outside and bearskin at least of misanthropy, he is strangely confused and dark in his conversation and delivers himself of almost all his conceptions with a Forceps, yet he says more than any man, I ever knew, yourself only excepted, that is his own in a way of his own—and oftentimes when he has warmed his mind, and the synovial juice has come out and spread over his joints, he will gallop for half an hour together with real Eloquence. He sends well-headed and well-feathered Thoughts straight forwards to the mark with a T’wang of the Bow-string. If you could recommend him, as a Portrait-painter, I should be glad. To be your Companion he is, in my opinion, utterly unfit. His own Health is fitful . . .

73. To George Coleridge

The legend of Coleridge's sloth and procrastination might well lead those who have not considered the vast bulk of his writings to overlook the fact that he was one of the leading political journalists of his time, a voice of authority in a field remote from poetry and metaphysics. Few poets indeed have thrown themselves with such zeal into the temporal events of history. But the recording angel is perhaps just. Political activities, in a poet, may be—and in Coleridge's case almost certainly were—an escape from the higher and harder vocation.

Greta Hall, Keswick.

Sunday Evening, Oct. ., 1803.

. . . In March, 1800, I published in the Morning Post, a long and very severe “character of Mr. Pitt,” promising at the

same time a Character of Bonaparte. Since the time of Junius no single essay ever made more noise in a newspaper than this, and day after day my character of Bonaparte was promised. I did not do it for reasons which appeared very forcible to me. In somewhat more than a month after the appearance of "Pitt," "Otto" sent privately to Stuart to enquire when the character of Bonaparte would appear. Stuart returned some evasive answers, and Otto then sent a confidential friend to Stuart to beg a particular answer, and this friend communicated to Stuart, that the question was asked at the instance of Bonaparte himself, who had been extremely impressed with the Character of Pitt, and very anxious to see his own, which, no doubt, he expected would be a pure eulogy. Stuart immediately came to me and was in very high spirits on the occasion. I turned and answered him "Stuart, that man will prove a tyrant and the deadliest enemy of the liberty of the Press." "Indeed!" "Yes, a man, the Dictator of a vast Empire to be so childishly solicitous for the *panegyric* of a newspaper scribbler, will be not equally irritable at the abuse of newspaper scribblers! I am sick and sad to feel how important little men become when madmen are in favor"—Stuart has often talked of publishing this conversation of mine, as an instance of political prophecy . . .

1803

I have sometimes derived a comfort from the notion, that possibly these horrid Dreams with all their mockery of Crimes and Remorse and Shame and terror might have been sent upon me to arouse me out of that proud and stercoral apathy, into which I had fallen—it was resignation, for I was not an atheist; but it was resignation without religion, because it was without struggle, without difficulty, because it originated in the Understanding, and a stealing . . . contempt, not in the affections. But amid all my . . . I have been a serene, perhaps too serene a student—I have [written] much and prepared materials for more—and yet I trust [that I do not] deceive

1803 myself when I say that I could leave all . . . without a pang. I have not read on an average less than 8 hours a day for the last three years—but all is vanity. I feel it more and more; all is vanity that does not lead to quietness and unity of heart, and to the silent awful idealess watching of that living spirit, and of that Life within us, which is the motion of that spirit—that Life which passeth all understanding . . .

74. To Thomas Poole

*Greta Hall, Keswick,
Friday, October 14, 1803.*

. . . I now see very little of Wordsworth: my own Health makes it inconvenient and unfit for me to go thither one third as often, as I used to do—and Wordsworth's Indolence, etc., keeps him at home. Indeed, were I an irritable man, and an unthinking one, I should probably have considered myself as having been very unkindly used by him in this respect—for I was at one time confined for two months, and he never came in to see me—me, who had ever payed such unremitting attentions to him. But we must take the good and the ill together; and by seriously and habitually reflecting on our own faults and endeavoring to amend them we shall then find little difficulty in confining our attention as to acts on our Friends' characters, to their good qualities. Indeed, I owe it to Truth and Justice, as well as to myself to say, that the concern, which I have felt in this instance, and one or two other more *crying* instances, of Self-involution in Wordsworth, has been almost wholly a Feeling of friendly Regret, and disinterested Apprehension—I saw him more and more benetted in hypochondriacal Fancies, living wholly among *Devotees*—having every

the minutest Thing, almost his very Eating and Drinking done for him by his Sister, or Wife—and I trembled, lest a Film should rise, and thicken on his moral Eye. The habit too of writing such a multitude of small Poems was in this instance hurtful to him—such Things as that Sonnet of his in Monday's Morning Post, about Simonides and the Ghost—I rejoice therefore with a deep and true Joy, that he has at length yielded to my urgent and repeated—almost unremitting—requests and remonstrances—and will go on with the Recluse exclusively. A great Work, in which he will sail on; an open Ocean, and a steady wind; unfretted by short tucks, reefing, and hawling and, disentangling the ropes—great work necessarily comprehending his attention and Feelings within the circle of great objects and elevated Conceptions—thus is his natural Element . . .

75. To Richard Sharp

Richard Sharp, known as 'Conversation Sharp,' was a banker, Member of Parliament and a distinguished critic. He was a friend of Wordsworth's and on intimate terms with Coleridge and Southey. [Note by E. H. Coleridge. Letters, p. 447.]

*King's Arms, Knaal,
Sunday morning, January 15, 1804.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I give you thanks—and, that I may make the best of so poor and unsubstantial a return, permit me to say, that they are such thanks as can only come from a nature unworldly by constitution and by habit, and now rendered more than ever impressible by sudden restoration—resurrection I might say—from a long, long sick-bed. I had gone to Grasmere to take my farewell of William Wordsworth, his wife and his sister, and

thither your letters followed me. I was at Grasmere a whole month, so ill, as that till the last week I was unable to read your letters. Not that my inner being was disturbed; it seemed more than usually serene and self-sufficing; but the exceeding pain, of which I suffered every now and then, and the fearful distresses of my sleep, had taken away from me the connecting link of voluntary power, which continually combines that part of us by which we know ourselves to be, with that outward picture or hieroglyphic, by which we hold communion with our like—between the vital and the organic—or what Berkeley, I suppose, would call mind and its sensuous language. I had only just strength enough to smile gratefully on my kind nurses, who tended me with sister's and mother's love, and often, I well know, wept for me in their sleep, and watched for me even in their dreams. Oh, dear sir! it does a man's heart good, I will not say, to know such a family, but even to know that there *is* such a family. In spite of Wordsworth's occasional fits of hypochondriacal uncomfotableness,—from which, more or less, and at longer or shorter intervals, he has never been wholly free from his very childhood,—in spite of this hypochondriacal graft in his nature, as dear Wedgwood calls it, his is the happiest family I ever saw, and were it not in too great sympathy with my ill health—were I in good health, and their neighbour—I verily believe that the cottage in Grasmere Vale would be a proud sight for Philosophy. It is with no idle feeling of vanity that I speak of my importance to them: that it is *I*, rather than another, is almost an accident; but being so very happy within themselves they are too good, not the more, for that very reason, to want a friend and common object of love out of their household. I have met with several genuine Philologists, Philonoists, Physiophilists, keen hunters after knowledge and science; but truth and wisdom are higher names than these—and *revering* Davy, I am half angry with him for doing that

which would make me laugh in another man—I mean, for prostituting and profaning the name of “Philosopher,” “great Philosopher,” “eminent Philosopher,” etc., etc., etc., to every fellow who has made a lucky experiment, though the man should be Frenchified to the heart, and though the whole Seine, with all its filth and poison, flows in his veins and arteries. 1804

Of our common friends, my dear sir, I flatter myself that you and I should agree in fixing on T. Wedgwood and on Wordsworth as genuine Philosophers - for I have often said (and no wonder, since not a day passes but the conviction of the truth of it is renewed in me, and with the conviction, the accompanying esteem and love), often have I said that T. Wedgwood's faults impress me with veneration for his moral and intellectual character more than almost any other man's virtues; for under circumstances like his, to have a fault only in that degree is, I doubt not, in the eye of God, to possess a high virtue. Who does not prize the Retreat of Moreau more than all the straw-blaze of Bonaparte's victories? And then to make it (as Wedgwood really does) a sort of crime even to think of his faults by so many virtues retained, cultivated, and preserved in growth and blossom, in a climate - where now the gusts so rise and eddy, that deeply rooted must *that* be which is not snatched up and made a plaything of by them,--and, now, “the parching air burns fre.”

W. Wordsworth does not excite that almost painfully profound moral admiration which the sense of the exceeding difficulty of a given virtue can alone call forth, and which therefore I feel exclusively towards T. Wedgwood; but, on the other hand, he is an object to be contemplated with greater complacency, because he both deserves to be, and *is*, a happy man; and a happy man, not from natural temperament, for therein lies his main obstacle, not by enjoyment of the good things of this world - for even to this day, from the first

dawn of his manhood, he has purchased independence and leisure for great and good pursuits by austere frugality and daily self-denials; nor yet by an accidental confluence of amiable and happy-making friends and relatives, for every one near to his heart has been placed there, by choice and after knowledge and deliberation; but he is a happy man, because he is a Philosopher, because he knows the intrinsic value of the different objects of human pursuit, and regulates his wishes in strict subordination to that knowledge; because he feels, and with a *practical* faith, the truth of that which you, more than once, my dear sir, have with equal good sense and kindness pressed upon me, that we can do but one thing well, and that therefore we must make a choice. He has made that choice from his early youth, has pursued and is pursuing it; and certainly no small part of his happiness is owing to this unity of interest and that homogeneity of character which is the natural consequence of it, and which that excellent man, the poet Sotheby, noticed to me as the characteristic of Wordsworth.

Wordsworth is a poet, a most original poet. He no more resembles Milton than Milton resembles Shakespeare—no more resembles Shakespeare than Shakespeare resembles Milton. He is himself and, I dare affirm that, he will hereafter be admitted as the first and greatest philosophical poet, the only man who has effected a complete and constant synthesis of thought and feeling and combined them with poetic forms, with the music of pleasurable passion, and with Imagination or the *modifying* power in that highest sense of the word, in which I have ventured to oppose it to Fancy, or the *aggregating* power—in that sense in which it is a dim analogue of creation—not 'all that we can *believe*, but all that we can *conceive* of creation.—Wordsworth is a poet, and I feel myself a better poet, in knowing how to honour *him* than in all my own poetic compositions, all I have done or hope to do; and I

prophesy immortality to his "Recluse," as the first and finest philosophical poem, if only it be (as it undoubtedly will be) a faithful transcript of his own most august and innocent life, of his own habitual feelings and modes of seeing and hearing 1804

76. To Robert Southey

*Rickman's Office, H. of Commons,
February 20, 1804, Monday noon.*

DEAR SOUTHEY,

The affair with Godwin began thus. We were talking of reviews, and bewailing their ill effects. I detailed my plan for a review, to occupy regularly the fourth side of an evening paper, etc., etc., adding that it had been a favourite scheme with me for two years past. Godwin very coolly observed that it was a plan which "no man who had a spark of honest pride" could join with. "No man, not the slave of grossest egotism, could unite in," etc. Cool and civil! I asked whether he and most others did not already do what I proposed in prefaces. "Aye! in *prefaces*; that is quite a different thing." I then adverted to the extreme rudeness of the speech with regard to myself, and added that it was not only a very rough, but likewise a very mistaken opinion, for I was nearly if not quite sure that it had received the approbation both of you and of Wordsworth. "Yes, sir! just so! of Mr. Southey—just what I said," and so on more Godwiniano in language so ridiculously and exclusively appropriate to himself, that it would have made you merry. It was even as if he was looking into a sort of moral looking-glass, without knowing what it was, and, seeing his own very, very Godwinship, had by a merry conceit christened it in your name, not without some annexment of me and Wordsworth. I replied by laughing in the first place at the capricious

nature of his nicety, that what was gross in folio should become double-refined in octavo foolscap or *pickpocket* quartos, blind slavish egotism in small pica, mainly discriminating self-respect in double primer, modest as maiden's blushes between boards, or in calf-skin, and only not obscene in naked sheets. And then in a deep and somewhat sarcastic tone, tried to teach him to speak more reverentially of his betters, by stating what and who they were, by whom honoured, by whom depreciated. Well! this gust died away. I was going home to look over his Duncity; he begged me to stay till his return in half an hour. I, meaning to take nothing more the whole evening, took a crust of bread, and Mary Lamb made me a glass of punch of most deceitful strength. Instead of half an hour, Godwin stayed an hour and a half. In came his wife, Mrs. Fenwick,* and four young ladies, and just as Godwin returned, supper came in, and it was now useless to go (at supper I was rather a mirth-maker than merry). I was disgusted at heart with the grossness and vulgar insanocecity of this dim-headed prig of a philosophicide, when, after supper, his ill stars impelled him to renew the contest. I begged him not to goad me, for that I feared my feelings would not long remain in my power. He (to my wonder and indignation) persisted (I had not deciphered the cause), and then, as he well said, I did "thunder and lighten at him" with a vengeance for more than an hour and a half. Every effort of self-defence only made him more ridiculous. If I had been Truth in person, I could not have spoken more accurately; but it was Truth in a war-chariot, drawn by the three Furies, and the reins had slipped out of the goddess's hands! . . . Yet he did not absolutely give way till that stinging *contrast* which I drew between him as a man, as a writer, and a benefactor of

*Mrs. E. Fenwick, author of *Secrecy*, a novel (1799); a friend of Godwin's first wife Mary Wollstonecraft. [Note by E. H. Coleridge. *Letters*, p. 465.]

society, and those of whom he had spoken so irreverently. In short, I suspect that I seldom, at any time and for so great a length of time, so continuously displayed so much power, and do hope and trust that never did I display one half the scorn and ferocity. The next morning, the moment when I awoke, O mercy! I did feel like a very wretch. I got up and immediately wrote and sent off by a porter, a letter, I dare affirm an affecting and eloquent letter to him, and since then have been working for him, for I was heart-smitten with the recollection that I had said all, all in the presence of his *wife*. But if I had known all I now know, I will not say that I should not have apologised, but most certainly I should not have made such an apology, for he confessed to Lamb that he should not have persisted in irritating me, but that Mrs. Godwin had twitted him for his prostration before me, as if he was afraid to say his life was his own in my presence. He admitted, too, that although he never to the very last suspected that I was tipsy, yet he saw clearly that something unusual ailed me, and that I had not been my natural self the whole evening. What a poor creature! To attack a man who had been so kind to him at the instigation of such a woman! And what a woman to instigate him to quarrel with *me*, who with as much power as any, and more than most of his acquaintances, had been perhaps the only one who had never made a butt of him who had uniformly spoken respectfully to him. But it is past! And I trust will teach me wisdom in future.

I have undoubtedly suffered a great deal from a cowardice in not daring to repel unassimilating acquaintances who press forward upon my friendship; but I dare aver, that if the circumstances of each particular case were examined, they would prove on the whole honourable to me rather than otherwise. But I have had enough and done enough. Hereafter I shall show a different face, and calmly inform those who press upon me that my health, spirits, and occupation alike make it

1804 necessary for me to confine myself to the society of those with whom I have the nearest and highest connection. So help me God! I will hereafter be quite sure that I do really and in the whole of my heart esteem and like a man before I permit him to call me friend.

I am very anxious that you should go on with your "Madoc." If the thought had happened to suggest itself to you originally and with all these modifications and polypus' tendrils with which it would have caught hold of your subject, I am afraid that you would not have made the first voyage *as* interesting at least as it ought to be, so as to preserve entire the fit proportion of interest. But go on!

I shall call on Longman as soon as I receive an answer from him to a note which I sent . . .

God bless you and

S. T. COLERIDGE.

77. To Robert Southey

Crown Inn, Portsmouth.

Wednesday Morning 10 o'clock March 28, 1804.

. . . While I was writing, Mottley, a dashing bookseller, a booted, buck-skin-breeched Jockey, to whom Stuart gave me a letter of most urgent recommendation (he is their Portsmouth correspondent) called—he is a man of wealth, and influence here, and a knowing Fellow. He took me thro' the Dock-yards, and I was lucky enough to be present at a *Heat*, i.e. at the welding a huge *Faggot* of small latten or red hot Iron into the Shafts of the Anchor of a man of war. It was truly sublime—the enormous 'Blaze, the regular yet complex intertwisted

strokes of between 20 and 30 men, with their huge Flail-hammers, the astonishment how they could throw them about, with such seeming wildness without dashing out each other's brains, and how they saved their eyes amidst the showers of sparks—the Iron *dripping* like a millwheel from the intense white heat—verily it was an unforgettable scene. The poor men are pitiable slaves—from 4 in the morning they work till 9 at night, and yet are payed less than any other in the yard. They all become old men in the prime of manhood. So do the rope-makers who get only work from 7 till noon. The rope-room is a *very low* broad room, of a length far too great for the eye to see from one end to the other—it gave me a grand idea of an Hindustan Cavern. A fire machine has been lately introduced, after a rebellion among the men, and but for the same deplorable delusion two thirds of that labour might be done by machines, which now eats up the rope-men like a Giant in a fairy tale . . .

1804

78. To Robert Southey

*Off Oporto and the coast of Portugal,
Monday noon, April 16, 1804.*

. . . let nothing, I conjure you, no false compliment to another, no false feeling indulged in yourself, deprive your eldest son of his father's name. Such was ever the manner of our forefathers, and there is a dignity, a self-respect, or an awful, preëminently self-referring event in the custom, that makes it well worthy of our imitation. I would have done [so], but that from my earliest years I have had a feeling of dislike and disgust connected with my own Christian name—such a vile short plumpness, such a dull abortive smartness in the first syllable, and this so harshly contrasted by the obscurity

1804 and indefiniteness of the syllabic vowel, and the feebleness of the uncovered liquid with which it ends, the wobble it makes, and struggling between a dis- and a tri-syllable, and the whole name sounding as if you were abeececing S.M.U.L. Altogether, it is, perhaps, the worst combination of which vowels and consonants are susceptible . . .

79. To His Wife


Coleridge left England for Malta, in 1804, in the hope of having his health restored in the warm South. His physical condition might have been improved, but for the mental anguish produced by the separation from his friends and his beloved children. Coleridge returned home by way of Italy, and Gillman records that his stay in Rome was a particularly happy one. No letters of the Italian period have survived.

[Malta], June, 1804.

[MY DEAR SARA,]

[I wrote] to Southey from Gibraltar, directing you to open the letter in case Southey should be in town. You received it, I trust, and learnt from it that I had been pretty well, and that we had had a famous quick passage. At Gibraltar we stayed five days, and so lost our fair wind, and [during our] after-voyage to Malta [there] was [a] storm, that carried away our main yard, etc., long dead calms, every rope of the whole ship reflected in the bright, soft blue sea, and light winds, often varying every quarter of an hour, and more often against us than for us. We were the best sailing vessel in the whole convoy; but every day we had to lie by and wait for the laggards. This is very disheartening; likewise the frequent danger in light winds or calms, or in foggy weather of running foul of each other is another heavy inconvenience of convoy,

and, in case of a deep calm in a narrow sea, as in the Gut of Gibraltar and in the Archipelago, etc., where calms are most common, a privateering or piratical row-boat might board you and make slaves of you under the very nose of the man-of-war, which would lie a lifeless hulk on the smooth water. For these row-boats, mounting from one to four or five guns, would instantly sink a man-of-war's boat, and one of them, last war, had very nearly made a British frigate *strike*. I mention these facts because it is a common notion that going under convoy you are "as snug as a bug in a rug." If I had gone without convoy on board the *Speedwell*, we should have reached Malta in twenty days from the day I left Portsmouth, but, however, we were congratulated on having had a *very good* passage for the time of the year, having been only forty days including our stay at Gibraltar; and if there be inconvenience in a convoy, I have reason to know and to be grateful for its advantages. The whole of the voyage from Gibraltar to Malta, excepting the four or five last days, I was wretchedly unwell . . . The harbour at Valetta is narrow as the neck of a bottle in the entrance; but instantly opens out into a lake with tongues of land, capes, one little island, etc., etc., where the whole navy of England might lie as in a dock in the worst of weather. All around its banks, in the form of an amphitheatre, rise the magnificent houses of Valetta, and its two over-the-water towns, Burmola and Il-Luvia (which are to Valetta what the Borough is to London). The houses are all lofty and built of fine white freestone, something like Bath, only still whiter and *newer* looking, yet the windows, from the prodigious thickness of the walls, being all out of sight, the whole appeared to me as Carthage to Æneas, a proud city, well nigh but not quite finished. I walked up a long street of good breadth, all a flight of stairs (no place for beast or carriages, each broad stair composed of cement-sand of *terra pozzolana*, hard and smooth as the hardest pavement of

smooth rock by the seaside and very like it). I soon found out Dr. Stoddart's house, which seemed a large pile of building. He was not at home, but I stayed for him, and in about two hours he came, and received me with an explosion of surprise and welcome—more *fun* than *affection* in the manner, but just as I wished it . . . Yesterday and to-day I have been pretty well. In a hot climate, now that the glass is high as 80 in the shade, the healthiest persons are liable to fever on the least disagreement of food with the first passages, and my general heath is, I would fain believe, better *on the whole* . . . I will try the most scrupulous regimen of diet and exercise; and I rejoice to find that the heat, great as it is, does not at all annoy me. In about a fortnight I shall probably take a trip into Sicily, and spend the next two or three months in some cooler and less dreary place, and return in September. For eight months in the year the climate of Malta is delightful, but a drearier place eye never saw. No stream in the whole island, only one place of springs, which are conveyed by aqueducts and supply the island with about one third of its water; the other two thirds they depend for upon the rain. And the reservoirs under the houses, walls, etc., to preserve the rain are *stupendous*! The tops of all the houses are flat, and covered with that smooth, hard composition, and on these and everywhere where rain can fall are channels and pipes to conduct it to the reservoirs. Malta is about twenty nules by twelve—a mere rock of freestone. In digging out thus they find large quantities of vegetable soil. They separate it, and with the stones they build their houses and garden and field walls, all of an enormous thickness. The fields are seldom so much as half an acre  one above another in that form, so that everything grows as in huge garden pots. The whole island looks like one monstrous fortification. Nothing *green* meets your eye—one dreary, grey-white,—and all the country towns from the retirement and invisibility of the windows look

like towns burnt out and desolate. Yet the fertility is marvellous. You almost see things grow, and the population is, I suppose, unexampled. The town of Valetta itself contains 1804 about one hundred and ten streets, all at right angles to each other, each having from twelve to fifty houses; but many of them very steep—a few *staired* all across, and almost all, in some part or other, if not the whole, having the footway on each side so *staired*. The houses lofty, all looking new. The good houses are built with a court in the centre, and the rooms large and lofty, from sixteen to twenty feet high, and walls enormously thick, all necessary for coolness. The fortifications of Valetta are endless. When I first walked about them, I was struck all of a heap with their strangeness, and when I came to understand a little of their purpose, I was overwhelmed with wonder. Such vast masses—bulky mountain-breasted heights; gardens with pomegranate trees—the prickly pears in the fosses, and the caper (the most beautiful of flowers) growing profusely in the interstices of the high walls and on the battlements. The Maltese are a dark, light-limbed people. Of the women five tenths are ugly; of the remainder, four fifths would be ordinary but that they look so *quaint*, and one tenth, perhaps, may be called quaint-pretty. The prettiest resemble pretty Jewesses in England. They are the noisiest race under heaven, and Valetta the noisiest place. The sudden shot-up, explosive bellows-cries you ever heard in London would give you the faintest idea of it. Even when you pass by a fruit stall the fellow will put his hand like a speaking trumpet to his mouth and shoot such a thunderbolt of sound full at you. Then the endless jangling of those cursed bells, etc. Sir Alexander Ball and General Valette (the civil and military commanders) have been marvellously attentive—Sir A.B. even friendly and confidential to me.

Poor Mrs. Stoddart was brought to bed of a little girl on the 24th of May, and it died on Tuesday, June 5th. On the

1806 night of its birth, poor little lamb! I had such a lively vision of my little Sara, that it brought on a sort of hysterical fit on me. O merciful God! how I tremble at the thought of letters from England. I should be most miserable *without* them, and yet I shall receive them as a sentence of death! So terribly has fear got the upper hand in my habitual feelings, from my long destitution of hope and joy.

Hartley, Derwent, my sweet children! a father's blessing on you! With tears and clasped hands I bless you. Oh, I must write no more of this . . .

80. To Thomas Clarkson

Thomas Clarkson, the Quaker philanthropist, an active worker in the cause of the liberation of slaves.

Bury St. Edmunds,

Oct. 13, 1806.

MY DEAR SIR:

You have proposed to me questions not more awful than difficult of Solution. What metaphysically the Spirit of God *is*? What the Soul? What the difference between the Reason, and the Understanding (νοῦς καὶ ἐπιστήμη, Vernunft, und Verstand) and how metaphysically we may explain St. Paul's assertion, that the Spirit of God bears witness to the Spirit of man? In the first place I must reduce the two first questions to the *form* of the 3rd and fourth. What the Spirit of God *is*, and what the Soul *is*, I dare not suppose myself capable of *conceiving*; according to my religious and philosophical creed they are *known* by those, to whom they are revealed, even (tho' in a higher and deeper degree) as color (blue for instance); or motion; or the difference between the

Spirals of the Hop-plant and the Scarlet Bean. *Datur*, non intelligitur. They can only be explained by images, that themselves require the same explanation, as in the latter Instance, 1806 that the one turns to the right, the other to the Left, the one is with, the other against the Sun, i.e., by relative and dependent, not positive and fundamental, notions. The only reasonable form of question appears to me to be, under what connection of ideas we may conceive and express ourselves concerning them, as that there shall be no inconsistency to be detected in our definitions, and no falsehood felt during their enunciation, which might war with our internal sense of their actuality. And in this sense these definitions are not without their use--they remove the stumbling-block out of the way of honest Infidels, that we are either Enthusiasts or Fanatics, that is, that our faith is built wholly either on blind bodily feelings arising in ourselves or caught contagiously by sympathy with the agitation of a superstitious crowd around the Fanes. (*Idolatry*) And further, Seraphs and purified Spirits may burn unextinguishably in the pure elementary fire of direct knowledge, which has its life and all the conditions of its power in itself - but our Faith resembles sublunary Fire, that needs the fuel of congruous, tho' perhaps perishable, notions to call it into actuality, and maintain it in clearness and the flame that rises heaven-ward, thus raising and glorifying the thick Vapor of our earthly Being. This premised, I venture --(most unfeignedly not without trembling and religious awe--) to proceed in an attempt to answer your first question: First then 1 -What is the difference or distinction between THING and THOUGHT? (or between those experiences of our nature, which in the unphilosophical jargon of Mr. Hume and his Followers, in *opposition* say rather, in direct contrariety, to the original and natural sense of the words, it is now fashionable to misname, IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS -) In other words, what do we mean by Reality? -I answer--that there

exist a class of notices which have all a ratio of vividness each with the other, so that tho' the one may be more vivid than the other, yet in the same and ordinary course of our nature, they are all alike contra-distinguishable to another class of notices, which are felt and conceived as dependent on the former, and to be to them the same sort as a stamp on paper, is to a seal sharp-cut in hand stone. The first class we call *Things* and *Realities*; and find in them—not indeed absolutely, but in a sense which we all *understand*—(and I am not now disputing with a quibbler in mock-logic, but addressing myself to a Reasoner, who *seeks* to understand, and looks into himself for a sense, which my words may excite in him, not to my words for a sense, which they must against his own will *force* on him) we find, I say, in this first class a *permanency*, and *expectability* so great, as to be capable of being contra-distinguished both by these, and by their *vividness* to the second class, that is our Thoughts, which therefore as appearing posterior and faint we deem the Images and imperfect Shadows of the former. Language seems to mark this process of our minds. Res—Reor. So Thought is the participle of the Past: *Thing*, derived from the Participle present, or actuality in full and immediate action. Consequently, all *our* Thoughts are in the language of the old Logicians *inadequate*: i.e. no *thought*, which I have, of any *thing* comprizes the whole of that Thing. I have a distinct Thought of a Rose-Tree; but what countless properties and goings-on of that plant are there, not included in my *Thought* of it? But the Thoughts of God, in the strict nomenclature of Plato, are all *Ideas*, archetypal, and anterior to all but himself alone: therefore consummately *adequate*: and therefore according to our common habits of conception and expression, incomparably more *real* than all things besides, and which do all depend on and proceed from them in some sort perhaps as our Thoughts from those *Things*; but in a more philosophical language we dare with less hesitation to say,

that they are more intensely *actual*; inasmuch as the human understanding never took an higher or more honorable flight, than when it defined the Deity to be—*Actus purissimus sine potentialitate*: and Eternity, the incommunicable attribute, and may we not say, the Synonyme of God, to be the simultaneous possession of all equally. These considerations, my dear Sir! appear to me absolutely necessary, as pioneers, to cut a way thro' to the direct solution of your first Question—What is (i.e. What can we without detectable incongruity conceive of) the Spirit of God? Answer—God's Thoughts are all consummately adequate Ideas, which are all incomparably more *real* than what we call *Things*. God is the sole self-comprehending Being, i.e. he has an Idea of himself, and that Idea is consummately adequate, and superlatively real—or as great men have said in the throes and strivings of deep and holy meditation, not only substantial or essential, but super-substantial, super-essential. This Idea therefore from all eternity co-existing with, and yet filiated, by the absolute Being (for as *our* purest Thoughts are *conceived*, so are God's not first conceived, but *begotten*: and thence is he verily and eminently *the Father*) is the same, as the Father in all things, but the impossible one, of self-origination. He is the substantial Image of God, in whom the Father beholds well-pleased his whole Being—and being substantial (*ὑποστατικῶς*) he of divine and permanent will, and a necessity which is the absolute opposite of compulsion, as delightedly and with as intense *Love* contemplates the Father in the Father, and the Father in himself, and himself in the Father. But all the actions of the Deity are intensely real or substantial; therefore the action of Love, by which the Father contemplates the Son, and the Son the Father, is equally real with the Father and the Son; and proceeds co-eternally both from the Father and the Son—and neither of these three *can* be conceived *apart*, nor *confusedly*—so that the Idea of God involves that of a Tri-unity;

and as that Unity or Indivisibility is the interest, and the Archetype, yea, the very substance and element of all other Unity and Union, so is that Distinction the most manifest, and indestructible of all distinctions—and Being, Intellect, and Action, which in their absoluteness are the Father, the Word, and the Spirit will and must for ever be and remain the “genera generalissima” of all knowledge. Unitarianism in it’s immediate intelligential (the Spirit of Love forbid, that I should say or think, in it’s intention and actual) consequences, is Atheism or Spinozism—God becomes a mere power in darkness, even as Gravitation, and instead of a Moral Religion of practical Influence we shall have only a physical Theory to gratify ideal curiosity—no Sun, no Light with vivifying Warmth, but a cold and dull moonshine, or rather star-light which shews itself but shews nothing else—Hence too, the Hæresy of the Greek Church in affirming, that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father, renders the thrice sacred doctrine of the Tri-unity not only above, but against, Reason. Hence too, the doctrine of the Creation assumes it’s intelligibility—for the Deity in all it’s three distinctions being absolutely perfect, neither susceptible of additions—or diminution, the Father *in* his Son as the Image of himself surveying the Possibility of all things possible, and with that Love, which is the Spirit of holy Action (το αγιον πνεῦμα as the air + motion = a wind) exerted that Love *in* that Intelligence, and that Intelligence *with* that Love (as nothing new could be effected on the divine Nature, in it’s whole Self) therefore in giving to all possible things contemplated in and thro’ the Son that degree of Reality, of which it’s Nature was susceptible. And this leads directly to your Second Question, namely—2. What is (that is, what can we congruously conceive of) the Soul?—

As the Father by and for the Word, and with and thro’ the Holy Spirit has given to all possible existences all sus-

ceptible perfection, it is in the highest degree probable that all things, susceptible of Progression, are progressive; and as Intelligence involves the notion of *order*, it follows necessarily, that as we can have no notion of desirable Progression (i.e. desirable for the Progressor, as well as for all others) but what supposes a growth of consciousness—or the image of what incommunicable attribute of self-comprehension, to which all creatures make approaches such as the Geometricians figure to us in the demonstration of Asymptotes, Now from those Possibilities, which exist only in the consciousness of others (and hence the absolutely inanimate is called by the Platonists, *τα μη οντα*) to the highest consciousness short of Deity there must subsist infinite orderly degrees—1. those who exist to themselves only in *moments*, and whose consciousness exists in higher minds. 2. those who are conscious of consciousness, but not only not of their whole consciousness, but who do not make that consciousness of a continuousness an object of secondary consciousness—i.e. who are not endued with reflex Faculties. 3. Those who tho' not conscious of the whole, of their continuousness, are yet both conscious of a continuousness— and make that the object of a reflex consciousness— and of this third Class the Species are infinite; and the first or lowest, as far as we know, is Man, or the human Soul. For Reflexion seems the first approach to, and shadow of, the divine Permanency; the first effect of divine working in us to find the Past and Future with the Present, and thereby to let in upon us some faint glimmering of that State in which Past, Present, and Future are co-adunated in the adorable I AM. But this state and growth of reflex consciousness (my Time will not permit me to supply all the Links; but by a short meditation you will convince yourself) is not conceivable without the action of kindred souls on each other, i.e. the modification of each by each, and of each by the whole. A male and female Tyger is neither more or less whether

you suppose them existing in their appropriate wilderness, or whether you suppose a thousand Pairs. But man is truly altered by the co-existence of other men; his faculties cannot be developed in himself alone, and only by himself. Therefore the human race not by a bold metaphor, but in a sublime reality, approach to and might become, one body whose Head is Christ (the Logos). Hence with a certain degree of satisfaction to my own mind I can define the human Soul to be that class of Being, as far as we are permitted to know, the first and lowest of that class, which is endued with a reflex consciousness of it's own continuousness, and the great end and purpose of all it's energies and sufferings is the growth of that reflex consciousness: that class of Being too, in which the Individual is capable of being itself contemplated as a Species of itself, namely, by it's conscious continuousness moving on in an unbroken Line, while at the same time the whole Species is capable of being regarded as one Individual. Now as the very idea of consciousness implies a recollection of the last Links, and the growth of it an extension of that retrospect, Immortality—of the recollection after the Sleep and Change (probably and by strict analogy the growth) of Death (for growth of body and the conditional causes of intellectual growth are found all to take place during Sleep, and Sleep is the Term repeatedly and as it were fondly used by the inspired Writers as the Exponent of Death, and without it the awful, and undoubtedly taught, Doctrine of the Resurrection has no possible meaning)—the very idea of such a consciousness, permit me to repeat, implies a recollection after the Sleep of Death of all material circumstances that were at least immediately previous to it. A spacious field here opens itself for moral reflection, both for Faith, and for Consolation, when we consider the growth of consciousness (and of what kind our's is, our *conscience* sufficiently reveals to us: for of what use or meaning could *Conscience* be to a Being, who in any state of

it's Existence should become to itself utterly lost, and entirely new?) as the end of our earthly Being—when we reflect too, how habits of Vice of all kinds tend to retard this growth, and how all our sufferings tend to extend and open it out, and how all our Virtues and virtuous and loving affections tend to bind it, and as it were to inclose the fleeting Retrospect as within a wall!—And again, what sublime motives to self-respect with humble Hope does not the Idea give, that each Soul is a Species in itself; and what Impulses to more than brotherly Love of our fellow-creatures, the Idea that all men form as it were, one Soull—

1806

Your third Question admits—in consequence of the preceding—of a briefer and more immediate Answer. What is the difference between the Reason, and the Understanding? I would reply, that that Faculty of the Soul which apprehends and retains the mere notices of Experience, as for instance that such an object has a triangular figure, that it is of such or such a magnitude, and of such and such a color, and consistency, with the anticipation of meeting the same under the same circumstances, in other words, all the mere *Φαινόμενα* of our nature, we may call the Understanding. But all such notices, as are characterized by *Universality* and *Necessity*, as that every Triangle *must* in all places and at all times have it's two sides greater than it's third—and which are evidently not the effect of any Experience, but the condition of all Experience—that indeed without which Experience itself would be inconceivable, we may call Reason—and this class of knowledge was called by the Ancients *Νοούμενα* in distinction from the former, or *Φαινόμενα*. Reason is therefore most eminently the Revelation of an immortal soul, and it's best, Synonime—it is the forma formans, which contains in itself the law of it's own conceptions. Nay it is highly probable, that the contemplation of essential Formas, remaining the same thro' all varieties of color and magnitude and

1806 developement, as in the acorn even as in the Oak, first gave to the mind the ideas, by which it explained to itself those notices of it's Immortality revealed to it by it's conscience.

Your fourth Question appears to me to receive a full answer from the preceding Data. For if God with the Spirit of God created the Soul of Man as far as it was possible according to his own Likeness, and if he be an omni-present Influence, it necessarily follows, that his action on the Soul of Man must awake in it a conscious [ness] of actions within itself analogous to the divine action; and that therefore the Spirit of God truly bears witness to the Spirit of Man, even as vice versa the awakened Spirit will bear witness to the Spirit of God. Suppose a dull impression from a Seal prefixed anew by that Seal—it's recovered characters bear witness to the Seal, even as the Seal had borne witness to the latent yet existing Impression.

Accept my thanks for your trouble about my Trunk; it was impossible for you to have done otherwise than you did, acting with your habitual kindness and avoidal of procrastination. Mrs. Clarkson bore her journey well; and has continued remarkably well till this Day (i.e. Wednesday)—This afternoon she has been in pain; but I think it will be transient. I leave Bury tomorrow, God permitting—I need not say, I shall be glad to hear of and from you at Keswick: for I am with unfeigned Esteem your affectionate Friend

S. T. COLLRIDGE.

81. To George Coleridge

April 2, 1807

. . . In short, with many excellent qualities of strict modesty, attention to her children and economy Mrs. Coleridge has a temper and general tone of feeling, which after a long and for

six years (at least) a patient trial I have found wholly incompatible with even an endurable life, and such as to preclude all chance of my ever developing the talents, which my Maker has entrusted to me or of applying the acquirements which I have been making one after the other, because I could not be doing nothing, and was too sick at least to exert myself in drawing from the sources of my own mind to any perseverance in any regular plan. The few friends who have been witnesses of my domestic life, have long advised separation, as the necessary condition of everything desirable for me. Nor does Mrs. Coleridge herself state or pretend to any objection on the score of attachment to me. That it will not look *respectable* for her, is the sum into which all her objections resolve themselves. At length, however, it is settled (indeed the state of my health, joined with that of my circumstances, and the duty of providing what I can for my three children, would of themselves dictate the measure, tho' we were only indifferent to each other), but Mrs. Coleridge wishes, and very naturally to accompany me into Devonshire that our separation may appear free from all shadow of suspicion of any other cause than that of unfitness and unconquerable difference of temper . . .

82. To Hartley Coleridge, Actat. X

. April 3, 1807.

MY DEAR BOY,

In all human beings good and bad qualities are not only found together, side by side, as it were, but they actually tend to produce each other; at least they must be considered as twins of a common parent, and the amiable propensities too often sustain and foster their unhandsome sisters. (For the old Romans personified virtues and vices both as women.) This is

a sufficient proof that mere natural qualities, however pleasing and delightful, must not be deemed virtues until they are broken in and yoked to the plough of *Reason*. Now to apply this to your own case—I could equally apply it to myself—but you know yourself more accurately than you can know me, and will therefore understand my argument better when the facts on which it is built exist in your own consciousness. You are by nature very kind and forgiving, and wholly free from revenge and sullenness; you are likewise gifted with a very active and self-gratifying fancy, and such a high tide and flood of pleasurable feelings, that all unpleasant and painful thoughts and events are hurried away upon it, and neither remain in the surface of your memory nor sink to the bottom of your heart. So far all seems right and matter of thanksgiving to your Maker; and so all really *is* so, and will be so, if you exert your reason and free will. But on the other hand the very same disposition makes you less impressible both to the censure of your anxious friends and to the whispers of your conscience. Nothing that gives you pain dwells long enough upon your mind to do you any good, just as in some diseases the medicines pass so quickly through the stomach and bowels as to be able to exert none of their healing qualities. In like manner, this power which you possess of shoving aside all disagreeable reflections, or losing them in a labyrinth of day-dreams, which saves you from some present pain, has, on the other hand, interwoven with your nature habits of procrastination, which, unless you correct them in time (and it will require all your best exertions to do it effectually), must lead you into lasting unhappiness.

You are now going with me (if God have not ordered it otherwise) into Devonshire to visit your Uncle G. Coleridge. He is a very good man and very kind; but his notions of right and propriety are very strict, and he is, therefore, exceedingly shocked by any gross deviations from what is right and proper.

I take, therefore, this means of warning you against those bad habits, which I and all your friends here have noticed in you; and, be assured, I am not writing in anger, but on the contrary with great love, and a comfortable hope that your behaviour at Ottery will be such as to do yourself and me and your dear mother credit. 1807

First, then, I conjure you never to do anything of any kind when out of sight which you would not do in my presence. What is a frail and faulty father on earth compared with God, your heavenly Father? But God is always present. Specially, never pick at or snatch up anything, catable or not. I know it is only an idle, foolish trick; but your Ottery relations would consider you as a little thief; and in the Church Catechism *picking* and *stealing* are both put together as two sorts of the same vice, "And keep my hands from picking and stealing." And beside, it is a dirty trick; and people of weak stomachs would turn sick at a dish which a young *filth-paw* had been fingering.

Next, when you have done wrong acknowledge it at once, like a man. Excuses may show your ingenuity, but they make your *honesty* suspected. And a grain of honesty is better than a pound of wit. We may admire a man for his cleverness; but we love and esteem him only for his goodness; and a strict attachment to truth, and to the whole truth, with openness and frankness and simplicity is at once the foundation stone of all goodness, and no small part of the superstructure. Lastly, do what you have to do at once, and put it out of hand. No procrastination; no self-delusion; no "I am sure I can say it, I need not learn it again," etc., which *sure's* are such very unsure folks that nine times out of ten their sureships break their word and disappoint you.

Among the lesser faults I beg you to endeavour to remember not to stand between the half-opened door, either while you are speaking, or spoken to. But come *in* or go *out*, and always

1808 speak and listen with the door shut. Likewise, not to speak so loud, or abruptly, and never to interrupt your elders while they are speaking, and not to talk at all during meals. I pray you, keep this letter, and read it over every two or three days.

Take but a little trouble with yourself, and every one will be delighted with you, and try to gratify you in all your reasonable wishes. And, above all, you will be at peace with yourself, and a double blessing to me, who am, my dear, my very dear Hartley, most anxiously, your fond father,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S. I have not spoken about your mad passions and frantic looks and pout-mouthing; because I trust that is all over.

Hartley Coleridge, Coleorton, Leicestershire.

83. To Henry Crabb Robinson

Henry Crabb Robinson, the diarist, made it his business to know almost every important literary figure of his day.

Tuesday Morning,

[*Endorsed by H. C. Robinson, May 3, 1808.*]

MY DEAR SIR,

Sexcenti in the Latin writers, if I remember right, stands for an indefinite number, but dearest Mrs. C.'s Note first informed me, that "can admit as many as he pleases," is synonymous with twelve Tickets. However, tho' those are disposed of, if you will come a quarter of an hour before two, and find me (as you will) in the apparatus room close by the Lecture Room; you shall be sure to have admittance—not only to day, but during every one of my Lectures, which you may have time or inclination to attend. *Perhaps*, I may have to request you for this day only to sit—where Davy, and a great number of my best and most honored friends sit, some always from *choice*, others for the day only in order to give me

an opportunity of introducing more than my number, by putting the Ladies *below*, and sending my male friends above—i.e. in the Gallery. You will find there (I assure you) the *most* 1808 *respectable* part of my audience—those that you at least will regard so.—Basil Montague and his friends will be there—and many others—I should not wonder if Dr. Bell (whom you will know by his pale pleasant face and spectacles) was to creep into a corner there, from an amiable curiosity about a subject in which he must feel so deep and specific an Interest. I however shall speak just what I feel, under the supposition that he is not present—for no man who ever knew me, suspected me of flattery—and I *feel*, that I have a right to praise—for my Heart on such occasions beats in my Brain. Nothing but endless Interruptions and the necessity of dining out far oftener than is either good for me, or pleasant to me, joined with the reluctance to move (partly from previous exhaustion by company, I cannot keep out)—for one cannot, dare not, always be “not at home” or “very particularly engaged” (and the last very often will not serve my Turn)—these added to my bread and cheese employments, & my Lectures which are—bread and cheese i.e. a very losing bargain in a pecuniary view—have prevented me day after day from returning your kind calls. Più verrai, più non posso. I will as soon as I can. In the meantime I have left your name with the old woman, and the attendants in the office, as one to whom I am always at home when I am at home. For Wordsworth has taught me to desire your acquaintance and to esteem you—and need I add that any one so much regarded by Mrs. C. (whom I love even as my very own Sister, whose Love for me with that of Wordsworth’s Sister, Wife, and Wife’s Sister, form almost the only Happiness, I have on earth) can never be indifferent to,

dear Sir,

Your sincere Friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

84. To Mrs. S. T. Coleridge

1808 *Coleridge was living mostly with the Wordsworths at Grasmere from 1808-1810. 'We all three' refers to himself, Wordsworth and little Sara. Coleridge's heartfelt love for his children is evident in every reference to them in his correspondence, but this is one of the few accounts relating to his daughter Sara.*

*Allan Bank, Grasmere,
Friday Night [September,] 1808.*

MY DEAR SARA

We arrived all three safe. O it was a perfect comedy to see little John on Sara's entrance. He had screamed with Joy on seeing us come up the field; but when Sara entered he ran and crept under the kitchen-table, then peeped out at her, then all red with Blushes crept back again, laughing half-convulsively yet faintly—at length he came out and throwing his pinafore over his face and with both hands upon that, he ran and kissed her thro' the pinafore— Soon however all was agreed— John has put the Question, and Sara has consented—But (says she) is the Church a far way off? Nay, replies John—nought but a little bit, and I'll carry you on my back all the way, and all the way back, after we are married. Sara sleeps with me. She has made the children as happy as happy can be—Every one is delighted with her, indeed it is absolutely impossible that there can be a sweeter or a sweetlier behaved child. This is not my speech; but Wordsworth's. Little John absolutely dotes on her; and she is very fond of him, and very good to all of them. O she has the sweetest Tongue in the world—she talks by the hour to me in bed—and does not at all disturb me in the night. She lies so quiet. Little Catharine is a fine baby, and the Mother continues well. Dorothy just came in now to say, she was about to write to you: but finding

that I am writing, she will defer it to the next carrier— O pray remember to send my bonny red Razor case, which I left in the room where William slept . . .

1808

★ ★ ★

I am now well again, and have been at work and in good spirits.

Be assured, my dear Sara! that your kind behavior has made a deep impression on my mind—would to God it had been always so on both sides—but the Past is past, and my business is to recover the Tone of my constitution if possible and to get money for you and our children. I trust, I shall never wilfully do any thing to give you the least pain. Heaven knows! nothing is more at my Heart than to be conducive to your comfort of mind, body, and estate—for you mistake greatly, if you imagine I do not entertain both affection and a very great esteem for you. May God bless us both.

When you have received an answer from Miss Nevins, pray let me know— Mary's confinement has prevented my seeing Mr. Dawes hitherto— Pray send me a good lot of books by each carrier—no odds, with what you begin as many each time as you conveniently can—and lastly the shelves.

Little Sara is gone to bed; but left with me her “loving kind dutiful Love to dear Mama, and to Dervy dear, and Hartley tho' he is sic a wet kisser; and to Edith”—she told me last night, that Edith and she tell each other a deal of knowledge—and verily Sara is a deal cleverer than I supposed. She is indeed a very sweet unblameable Darling—and what elegance of Form and Motion—her dear eyes too! as I was telling a most wild story to her and John her large eyes grew almost as large again with wonderment—

Remember me affectionately to Southey and believe me my dear Sara

Your affectionate Husband

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Be pleased to send me a box of wafers: and give my love to my dearest Hartley and my own *my soul*, my Derwent. O
1809 bless them both.

85. To George Coleridge.

Coleridge was at this time writing round to all his friends past and present in the attempt to interest them in The Friend, of which he was the editor, printer, and publisher. In spite of endless difficulties The Friend continued to appear from June, 1809, to March, 1810, during Coleridge's residence with the Wordsworths, where Mrs. Wordsworth's sister Mary Hutchinson acted as his assistant.

Greta Hall, Keswick,

Tuesday Morning, April, 1809.

“*The Friend* is the very same sort of publication as Cobbett's Political Journal. It will leave Penrith every Thursday morning, arrive in London every Saturday morning, and in all other places of the Kingdom, proportional to their distance.

I have been asked if it will be at all *political*. My answer has been—if by political be meant the events of the day, or personalities, ministerial or anti-ministerial or *party* politics in any shape or disguise, *The Friend* will not be political, but if under “political” be included essays on Legislature, international morality and the virtues and vices that found or undermine the Well-being of nations, assuredly it will in that case be *political*; for my object is to draw the attention of my countrymen, as far as in me lies, from expedients and short sighted tho’ quicksighted Experience, to that grand algebra of our moral nature, *Principle* and *Principles*—in public as in private life, in criticism, ethics and religion. For I have long had reason to suspect, that in times of old, the *Principles* were better than the men, but that now the men (faulty as they are) are better than their *Principles* . . .

86. To Mr. R. J. Street

Grasmere, 1809

September 19, [1809].

. . . I am hard at work, and feel a pleasure and eagerness in it, which I have not known for years—a consequence and reward of my courage in at length overcoming the fear of dying suddenly in my Sleep, which Heaven knows! alone seduced me into the fatal habit of taking enormous quantities of Laudanum, and latterly, of spirits too—the latter merely to keep the former on my revolting Stomach. I am still far enough from well—my lungs are slightly affected, as by asthma, and my bowels dreadfully irritable; but I am far better than I could have dared expect. I left it off *all at once*; and drink nothing but Toast and Water, or Lemonade made with Creme of Tartar. If I entirely recover, I shall deem it a sacred duty to publish my cure, tho' without my name, for the practice of taking opium is dreadfully spread. Throughout Lancashire and Yorkshire it is the common Dram of the lower orders of People—in the small Town of Thorpe the Druggist informed me, that he commonly sold on market days two or three Pound of opium, and a Gallon of Laudanum—all among the labouring Classes. Surely, this demands legislative interference . . .

87. To Thomas Poole

Grasmere, Kendal, January 28, 1810.

. . . We will take for granted that "The Friend" can be continued. On this supposition I have lately studied "The Spectator," and with increasing pleasure and admiration. Yet it

1810 must be evident to you that there is a class of thoughts and feelings, and these, too, the most important, even practically, which it would be impossible to convey in the manner of Addison, and which, if Addison had possessed, he would not have been Addison. Read, for instance, Milton's prose tracts, and only *try* to conceive them translated into the style of "The Spectator," or the finest part of Wordsworth's pamphlet. It would be less absurd to wish that the serious Odes of Horace had been written in the same style as his Satires and Epistles. Consider, too, the very different objects of "The Friend," and of "The Spectator," and above all do not forget, that these are AWFUL TIMES! that the love of reading as a refined pleasure, weaning the mind from GROSSER enjoyments, which it was one of "The Spectator's" chief objects to awaken, has by that work, and those that followed (Connoisseur, World, Mirror, etc.), but still more, by Newspapers, Magazines, and Novels, been carried into excess: and "The Spectator" itself has innocently contributed to the general taste for unconnected writing, just as if "Reading made easy" should act to give men an aversion to words of more than two syllables, instead of drawing them *through* those words into the power of reading books in general. In the present age, whatever flatters the mind in its ignorance of its ignorance, tends to aggravate that ignorance, and, I apprehend, does on the whole do more harm than good. Have you read the debate on the Address? What a melancholy picture of the intellectual feebleness of the country! So much on the one side of the question. On the other (1) I will, preparatory to writing on any chosen subject, consider whether it *can* be treated popularly, and with that lightness and variety of illustration which form the charms of "The Spectator." If it can, I will do my best. If not, next, whether yet there may not be furnished by the *results* of such an Essay thoughts and truths that may be so treated, and form a second Essay. (3) I shall always, *besides* this, have at

least one number in four of rational entertainment, such as
 "Satyrane's Letters," as instructive as I can, but yet making
 entertainment the chief object in my own mind. But, lastly, 1810
 in the Supplement of "The Friend" I shall endeavour to
 include whatever of higher and more abstruse meditation may
 be needed as the foundations of all the work after it; and the
 difference between those who will read and master that Supple-
 ment, and those who decline the toil, will be simply this, that
 what to the former will be *demonstrated conclusions*, the latter
 must start from as from *postulates*, and (to all whose minds have
 not been sophisticated by a half-philosophy) *axioms*. For no
 two things, that are yet different, can be in closer harmony
 than the deductions of a profound philosophy, and the dictates
 of plain common sense. Whatever tenets are obscure in the
 one, and requiring the greatest powers of abstraction to
 reconcile, are the same which are held in manifest contradic-
 tion by the common sense, and yet held and firmly believed,
 without sacrificing A to $-\text{---}A$, or $-\text{---}A$ to A . . . After
 this work I shall endeavour to pitch my note to the idea of a
 common, well-educated, thoughtful man, of ordinary talents;
 and the exceptions to this rule shall not form more than one
 fifth of the work. If with all this it will not do, well! and *well*
 it will be, in its noblest sense: for *I* shall have done my best. Of
 parentheses I may be too fond, and will be on my guard in
 this respect. But I am certain that no work of impassioned and
 eloquent reasoning ever did or could subsist without them.
 They are the drama of reason, and present the thought grow-
 ing, instead of a mere *hortus siccus*. The aversion to them is one
 of the numberless symptoms of a feeble Frenchified Public.
 One other observation: I have reason to *hope* for contributions
 from strangers. Some from *you* I *rely* on, and these will give a
 variety which is highly desirable—so much so, that it would
 weigh with me even to the admission of many things from
 unknown correspondents, though but little above mediocrity,

if they were proportionately short, and on subjects which I should not myself treat . . .

1810 May God bless you, and your affectionate

S. T. COLERIDGE.

88. To William Wordsworth¹

Coleridge's destructive analysis of The Lady of the Lake in a private letter to Wordsworth must be contrasted with his generous attitude to Scott, shown on a later occasion when he refused to take up a charge against Scott of having borrowed from Christabel. See p. 183 et seq.

Grasmere.

[Summer, 1810.]

I am sending Scott's Lady of the Lake, having had it on my table week after week till it cried shame to me for not opening it—But truly as far as I can judge from the first 98 pages my reluctance was not unprophetic—Merciful Apollo! what an easy pace dost thou jog on with thy unspurred yet unpinioned Pegasus! The movement of the Poem (which is written with exception of a multitude of Songs in regular 8 syllable iambs) is between a sleeping canter and a market woman's trot—but it is endless—I seem never to have made any way—I never remember a narrative poem in which I felt the sense of Progress so languid—There are (speaking of the first 90 pages) two or three pleasing Images—That of the Swan p. 25— is the best—the following seems to me to demand something more for its introduction than a mere description for description's sake supplies—

With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Gray Birch and Aspen wept beneath,
Aloft the ash and warrior Oak
Cast anchor in the rifted Rock.

I wish, there were more faults of this kind, if it be a *fault* yet I think if it had been a beauty, it would not have instantly struck a perplexed feeling in my mind, as it did, and continues to do—a doubt - I seem to feel that I could have used the metaphor; but not in that way, or without other images or feelings in line with it-- That the Lady of the Lake is not without it's peccadillos against the 8th Commandment à la mode of Messieurs Scott and Campbell, this may suffice—

Some feelings are to mortals given

With less of Earth in them than Heaven.

In short, what I felt in Marmion I feel still more in the Lady of the Lake —viz.—that a man accustomed to cast words in metre, and familiar with descriptive Poets and Tourists, himself a Picturesque Tourist, must be troubled with a mental strangury, if he could not lift up his leg six times at six different corners, and each “*1. ;* — a canto— - I should imagine that even Scott's warmest admirers must acknowledge and complain of the number of prosaic lines *prose in polysyllables*, surely the worst of all prose for chivalrous Poetry— not to mention the liberty taken with our articles, and pron. relatives, such as --

And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream

As flattered thro' terrific Dream.

Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,

And reeled his wrath in scornful word:

“Rest safe, til' morning! Pity, were

Such check should feel the midnight air.

Then may'st thou to James Stuart tell

Roderick will keep the Lake and Ell,

Nor lacky, with his froward Clan,

‘The pagiant pomp of Earth's man!

More would be of Clan Alpine know,

Thou canst our strength and passes shew

Malise, what ho!’ his benchmark came—

“Gave our safe conduct to the Graeme!”

*Vide Wesley's
hymn for the
Armenian
Methodist
Chapel.

*Young Malcolm answered calm and bold,
 "Fear nothing for thy favourite bold—
 The spot an Angel deigned to grace,
 Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place:
 Thy churlish courtesy for those
 Reserve, who fear to be thy foes—
 As safe to me the mountain way
 At midnight, as in blaze of day,
 Tho' with his boldest at his back, What a thump-
 Even Roderick Dhu beset the track! ing braggadocio
 Brave Douglas—lovely Ellen—nay— this youthful
 Nought here of parting will I say— lover is!
 Earth does not hold a lone some glen,
 So secret, but we meet again—*
 Chieftain! ne two shall find an hour—"
 He said, and left the sylvan bower—*

On my word, I have not selected this stanza. I do not say that there are not many better, but I do affirm, that there are some worse, and that it is a fair specimen of the general style—But that you may not rely on my judgement I will transcribe the next stanza likewise, the 36th—

*Old Allan followed to the Strand†
 (Such was the Douglas's command)
 And anxious told, how, on the morn
 The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
 The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
 Dale, Glen, and Valley, Down, and Moor—*

*"S. has been called the Caledonian comet; but comets move in ellipses—and this is doubtless a most eccentric ellipse, which would frighten Priscian—" Note by S. T. C.

†"A miserable copy of [Gray's] the Bard—Allan too has a prophetic dream; and what is it? The very ancient story to be met with in all books of second sight, that a Gentleman travelling found a dinner prepared for him at a place where he had never been before, as related in Humphry Clinket et passim." Note by S. T. C.

*Much were the Peril to the Graeme
 From those, who to the signal came;
 Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
 Himself would row him to the Strand—
 He gave his counsel to the wind,
 While Malcolm did, unbreeding, bind,
 Round Dirk and Pouch and broad sword rolled,
 His ample plaid in tightened fold,
 And stripped his limbs to such array
 As best might suit the watery way—
 Then spoke abrupt; "farewell to thee,
 Pattern of old Idelity!"
 The minstrel's hand he kindly prest,—
 "O! could I point a place of rest!
 My Sovereign holds in ward my land,
 My uncle leads my vassal band;
 To smite his foes, his friends to aid,
 Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade"—*

Poor Malcolm! a hearty Blade that I will say for him—The Poem commences with the poorest Paraphrase-Parody of the Hart Leap Well—I will add but one extract more as an instance of the Poet's care for lyric harmony— Observe this a poem of the dark ages, and admire with me the felicity of aiding the imagination in its flight into the ages past, and oblivion of the present by—God Save the King! and other savory descants—

BOAT SONG

(Canto 2—19, p. 69)

*Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances,
 Honoured and blest be the evergreen Pine!
 Long may the Tree in his banner that glances,
 Flourish the shelter and grace of our line.
 Heaven send it happy den,
 Earth lend it sap anew,
 Gayly to bourgeon and broadly to grow
 While every highland glen*

*Sends our shouts back agen,
Roderick Vich Alpín dhu, ho! icroel*

1810 Now, that will tell that last Gaelic line is “a damned hard Hit”—as Reynolds said of a passage in King Lear—I suppose, there is some untranslatable Beauty in the Gaelic words, which has preserved this one line in each stanza unenglished, even as the old Popish Translators left the Latin words and phrases of the Vulgate sticking, like raisins in a pudding, in the English Text—

In short my dear William!—it is time to write a Recipe for Poems of this sort—(I amused myself a day or two ago on reading a Romance in Mrs. Radcliffe’s style with making out a scheme, which was to serve for all romances a priori only varying the proportions) —a Baron or Baroness ignorant of their Birth, and in some dependent situation—Castle—on a Rock—a Sepulchre at some distance from the Rock—Deserted Rooms—underground Passages—Pictures—a Ghost, so believed—or—a written record—blood on it! A wonderful cut-throat etc., etc., etc. Now I say, it is time to make out the component parts of the Scottish Minstrelsy—The first Business must be, a vast string of Patronymies, and names of Mountains, Rivers, etc.—the most commonplace imagery the Bard gave look almost as well as new by the introduction of Benvoirlich, Namvar, or copse-wood Gray that *moaned* (?) and *wept* on *Loch Achray* and mingled with the pine-trees *blue* on the bold cliffs of Ben Venue—

*How should the Poet e’er give o’er,
With his eye fixed on Cambusmore—
Need reins be tightened in Despair,
When rose Benedic’s crest in air
Tho’ not one image grace the Heath,
It gain such charm from flooded Teith—
Beside, you need not travel far,
To reach the Lake of Vennachar—*

Or ponder refuge from your Toil

By far Lochard or Aberfoil!

Secondly all the nomenclature of Gothic architecture, of 1810
Heraldry, of Arms, of Hunting and Falconry—these possess
the same power of reviving the caput mortuum and rust of
old imagery—besides, they will stand by themselves, stout
substantives, if only they are strung together, and some
attention is paid to the sound of the words—for no one
attempts to understand the meaning, which indeed would
snap the charm—3, some pathetic moralizing on old times,
or anything else, for the head and tail pieces—with a *Bard*
(that is absolutely necessary) and Songs of course—for the
rest, whatever suits Mrs. Radcliffe, i.e. in the Fable, and the
Dramatis Personæ will do for the Poem—with this advantage,
that however threadbare in the Romance shelves of the circu-
lating Library, it is to be taken as quite new as soon as told in
rhyme—it need not be half as interesting—and the Ghost may
be a Ghost, or may be explained—or both may take place in
the same poem—Then the Poet not only may but must mix all
dialects of all ages—and all styles from Dr. Robertson's to the
Babes in the Wood—

I have read only two cantos out of six—it is not that it
would be any act of self denial to send you the Poem, neither
is it for the pain which, I own, I should feel, and shrink at
but not from asking Southey to permit me to send it—that I
do not send you the Poem today—but because I think, you
would not wish me to ask Southey, who perhaps would refuse,
and certainly would grant it with reluctance and fear—and
because I take for granted that you will have a copy sent you
shortly.

I send the Brazil which has both entertained and instructed
me—The Kehama is expected—

May God bless you! I am envious to see the Babe; but long
more anxiously to see little Catherine— S. T. COLERIDGE.

89. To Henry Crabb Robinson

1811

32 Southampton Buildings,

[March, 1811.]

. . . In short, I believe, that *Love* (as distinguished both from Lust and from that habitual attachment which may include many Objects, diversifying itself by *degrees* only) that that *Feeling* (or whatever it may be more aptly called) that specific mode of Being, which one Object only can possess, and possesses totally, is always the abrupt creation of a moment—tho' years of *Dawning* may have preceded. I said *Dawning*; for often as I have watched the Sun-rising, from the thinning, diluting Blue to the Whitening, to the fawn-coloured, the pink, the crimson, the glory, yet still the Sun itself has always *started* up, out of the Horizon! between the brightest Hues of the Dawn and the first Rim of the Sun itself there is a *chasm*—all before were Differences of Degrees, passing and dissolving into each other—but there is a difference of *Kind*—a chasm of Kind in a continuity of Time. And as no man, who had never watched for the rise of the Sun, could understand what I mean, so can no man who has not been in Love, understand what Love is, tho' he will be sure to imagine and believe, that he does. Thus, Wordsworth is by nature incapable of being in Love, tho' no man more tenderly attached—hence he ridicules the existence of any other passion, than a compound of Lust with Esteem and Friendship, confined to one Object, first by accidents of association, and permanently, by the force of Habit and a sense of Duty. Now this will do very well—it will suffice to make a good Husband—it may be even desirable (if the largest sum of easy and pleasurable sensations in this Life be the right aim and end of human Wisdom) that we should have *this*, and no more—but still it is not *Love*—and there is such a passion, as Love—which is no more a com-

pound, than Oxygen, tho' like Oxygen, it has an almost universal affinity, and a long and finely graduated Scale of elective attractions. It combines with Lust—but how? Does Lust call forth or occasion Love? Just as much as the reek of the Marsh calls up the Sun. The sun calls up the vapour—attenuates, lifts it—it becomes a cloud—and now it is the Veil of the Divinity—the Divinity transpiercing it at once hides and declares his presence. We *see*, we are conscious of *Light* alone, but it is Light embodied in the earthly nature, which that Light itself awoke and sublimated. What is the Body, but the fixture of the mind? the stereotype Impression? Arbitrary are the Symbols—yet Symbols they are. Is Terror in my Soul—my Heart beats against my side—Is Grief? *Tears* form in my eyes. In her homely way the Body tries to interpret all the movements of the Soul. Shall it not then imitate and symbolize that divinest movement of a *finite* spirit—the yearning to compleat itself by Union? Is there not a Sex in Souls? We have all eyes, cheeks, Lips—but in a lovely woman are not the eyes womanly—yea, every form, in every motion, of her whole frame *womanly*? Were there not an Identity in the Substance, man and woman might *join*, but they could never *unify*—were there not throughout, in body and in soul, a corresponding and adapted Difference, there might be addition, but there could be no combination. One *and* one = 2; but one cannot be multiplied into one. $1 \times 1 = 1$ At best, it would be an idle echo, the same thing needlessly repeated—as the Idiot told the Clock— one, one, one etc.

It has just come into my head, that this Scrawl is very much in the Style of Jean Paul* . . .

*Jean Paul Richter.

90. To John J. Morgan

1811

This letter reveals the despondency and despair into which Coleridge had fallen, since the breach with Wordsworth. The Morgans indeed showed Coleridge every kindness, and it seems that Coleridge had on this occasion left them in a fit of self-condemnation. In a letter to Wordsworth on 4th May, 1812, Coleridge wrote of Morgan: "With whom I have been . . . with the exception of a few intervals when, from the bitter consciousness of my own infirmities and increasing irregularity of temper, I took lodgings, against his will, and was always by his zealous friendship brought back again. If it be allowed to call any one on earth Saviour, Morgan and his family have been my Saviours, body and soul."

Saturday Night,
[Postmark, October 15, 1811.]

DEAR MORGAN

On the Tuesday night after I had returned from Mr. Godwin's and his party of Mr. Curran, his daughter and Peter Pindar, I found a letter or rather a letter found me, in addition to one received before. It is no odds what. Suffice it was such as made me desirous not to see you: for I knew I must either tell you falsehoods which would answer no end, could I have endured to tell a deliberate falsehood, and if I had told you the truth it would probably have made you restless to attempt for me what you could not do with prudence or justice to yourself, and what at all events, I could not have received from you. That this my disappearance from you, will have afforded sign and seal to all the unfavourable judgements prompted by feelings of . . . *contempt* which, Heaven knows how! I have excited for the last 8 months or more in your wife and sister I am well aware. I say Heaven knows how! because I cannot torture my memory into a recollection of a single moment in

which I ever spoke, thought wished or felt anything that was
 not consistent with the most fondly cherished esteem and a
 personal and affectionate predilection for them, rendered 1811
 worthy to my own thoughts by a sense of gratitude. I dare
 affirm that few men have ever felt or regretted their own
 infirmities more deeply than myself—they have in truth
preyed too deeply on my mind, and the hauntings of regret
 have injured me more than the things to be regretted. Yet
 such as I am, such was I, when I was first under your hospitable
 roof—and such, unfortunately when I revisited you at Portland
 Place. But so it is. Our feelings govern our notions. Love a
 man and his talking shall be eloquence—dislike him, and the
 same thing becomes preaching. His quickness of Feeling and
 the starting Tear, shall be at one time natural sensibility—for
 the Tears swelled into his eye not for his own pains, or mis-
 fortunes, but either for others or for some wound from
 unkindness—the same at another time—shall be loathsome
 maudlin unmanliness. Activity of thought, scattering itself in
 jests, puns, and sportive nonsense, shall in the bud and blossom
 of acquaintanceship be amiable playfulness and met or anti-
 cipated by a laugh or correspondent jest, in the wane . . .
 of friendship an object of disgust and a ground of warning to
 those better-beloved *not to get into that way*. Such, however, is
 life. Some few may find their happiness out of themselves in
 the regard and sympathy of others; but most are driven back
 by repeated disappointments into themselves, there to find
 tranquillity, or (too often—sottish Despondency.) There are
 not those Beings on earth who can truly say that having pro-
 fessed affection for them, I ever either did or spoke unkindly
 or unjustly of them—would to heaven—the same thing was
 true of the Wordsworth family towards me. My present dis-
 tracting difficulties which have disabled me from doing
 what might have alleviated them, I must get thro' or sink
 under, as it may happen. Some consolation—nay, a great

consolation—it is that they have not fallen on me thro’ any vice, any extravagance or self-indulgence; but only from having imprudently hoped too highly of men—that if I had been treated with common tradesmanlike honesty by those, with whom (ignorantly blending the author with the publisher) I had traded—or with common humanity by a *Mæcenas* worth £50,000 who yet knows I have not received back—what he lent me on the prospect of my receiving in money what I sent out in paper and stamps. This could not have been. Meantime what with those clamorous letters from—[sic] and what with the never-closing festering wound of Wordsworth and his family, and other aggravations Fortune seems to be playing “more sacks on the Mill” with me—and who in the agonies of suffocation would not wish to breathe no more rather than to have his breath stifled?

I pray you, send my books and other *paucities* directed to No. 6, Southampton Buildings—for thither I have gotten—As to seeing you, if I could give comfort to you by receiving it from you, I would request it, but that is out of the question—Therefore think of me as one deceased who *had been* your sincere friend

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Burn this after you have read it.

Private. If I get thro’ these difficulties (and that done I doubt not that tranquillity of mind will enable me to mend all the rest) it will be my first desire to meet you. Till then what is the use of it? Pray send the books etc.—for something I must make up in a hurry—for I have tried in vain to compose anything anew. To transcribe is the utmost in my power.

91. To An Unknown Correspondent

[December, 1811.] 1811

SIR

As I am bound to thank you for your good-will, and the high opinion, you have been pleased to express of my Genius, so I ask in return that you should give me credit for perfect sincerity in the motives and feelings, which I shall assign for my inability to comply with your request.

Excuse me, if I say that I have ever held parallelisms adduced in proof of plagiarism or even of intentional imitation, in the utmost contempt. There are two kinds of Heads in the world of literature. The one I would call, SPRINGS: the other, TANKS. The latter class, habituated to receiving only, full or low, according to the state of it's Feeders, attach[es] no distinct notion to living production as contra-distinguished from mechanical formation. If they find a fine passage in Thomson, they refer it to Milton; if in Milton, to Euripides or Homer; and if in Homer, they take for granted it's pre-existence in the lost works of Linus or Musaeus. It would seem as if it was a part of their creed, that all Thoughts are traditional, and that not only the Alphabet was revealed to Adam, but all that was ever written in it that was worth writing. But I come to the point. I can scarcely call myself an Acquaintance of Mr. Walter Scott's; but I have met him twice or thrice in company. Those who hold that a man's nature is shewn in his Countenance would not need the confident assurance, which all his Friends and Acquaintances so unanimously give, that he is of the most frank and generous disposition, incapable of trick or concealment. The mere expression of his Features, and the Tones of his voice in conversation, independent of the matter, sufficiently attest the fervour and activity of his mind. The Proofs must be strong indeed, Sir! which could convince me that such a man could consciously make an unfair and selfish

use of *any* manuscript that came by accident into his possession—least of all, one of a known Contemporary. What then are
1811 they, the Facts that are to weaken this presumption?

First, that the Fragment, entitled Christabel, was composed many *years*, and known and openly admired by Mr. Scott some time, before the *publication* of the Lay of the Last Minstrel. (For be pleased to observe, it is no part of the known *Fact* that the Lay of the Last Minstrel, was not composed in part at least or at least *planned*, before Mr. S. had seen the Fragment in question.)

Secondly, that of those who had seen or heard the Fragment a large proportion were struck with certain lines the same or nearly the same in the L.L.M., with similar movements in the manner of narration and the arrangement of the Imagery, and lastly with that general resemblance which is exprest by the words—the one still reminded them of the other. Before I proceed to the arguments on the other side, I will examine these, and if I can rely on my own feelings at the present moment exactly as I would wish a friend of mine to do if I had been the fortunate author of the Lay of the Last Minstrel and the Marmion, and Mr. W.S. the earlier writer of the Christabel.

Now it must be obvious on the first calm reflection, that Mr. W.S. could have had no previous intention of using the Christabel, from the very fact, which has furnished the main strength of the contrary presumption. For before the appearance of the Lay of the L.M. he not only mentioned the Christabel repeatedly to persons who had never before heard of it, not only praised it with warmth, but *recited* it. In order to evade or weaken this fact, we must make the arbitrary supposition, that he had not at that time planned his Poem as it now appears: and that the purpose was formed in his mind afterwards, and while he was composing. A purpose, of course, implies consciousness. Now this again is rendered in

the highest degree improbable by another of the Facts above stated, and by one too that has assuredly had no small share in occasioning the suspicion—the existence, I mean of a number of lines the same or nearly the same in both authors. I have not the Poems by me; but I distinctly remember, that the greater part consisted of phrases, such as Jesu Maria! shield thee well, etc.—which might have occurred to a score of writers who had been previously familiar with Poems and Romances written before the Reformation or translated from the Spanish—and the small Remainder contain nothing remarkable either in language, thought, feeling or imagery. From long disuse I cannot have the tenth part of the fluency in versification as Mr. Scott or Southey have: and yet I would undertake in a couple of Hours to alter every one of these lines or Couplets, without the least injury to the context, to retain the same meaning in words equally poetical and suitable, and yet entirely remove all the *appearance* of Likeness. And this, Sir! is what an intentional Plagiarist would have done. He would have *translated*, not transcribed.

If then there be any just ground for the Charge of, “stolen feathers” (say rather, for an imitation of the mode of flying), it must be found in the supposed close likeness of the metre, the *movements*, the way of relating an event, in short, in the general resemblance of the great Features, which have given to the Physiognomy of Mr. W.S.’s late Poems their marked originality, in the public feeling. Now that several persons, and those too persons of education, and liberal minds, at several times, and without any knowledge of each other’s opinions, have been struck with this general resemblance, and have expressed themselves more or less strongly on the subject, I do not pretend to deny: for it is a fact of my own knowledge. But it would be most dishonorable in me if I did not add, that *if* I had framed my expectations exclusively by the opinions and assertions of others, those whose expressions were most

limited, would have excited anticipations which my own after Perusal of the Lay of the Last Minstrel were far from verifying to my own mind. But I will admit that of this neither I or Mr. S. are or can be the proper Judges. A poet may be able to appreciate the merit of each particular Part of his own Poem as well, or (if he have a well-disciplined mind) better than any other can do; but of the *effect* of the whole as a whole, he cannot from the very nature of Things (from the fore-knowledge of each following part, from the parts having been written at different times, from the blending of the pleasures and disgusts of composing, with the composition itself, etc.) have the same sensation, as the Reader or auditor to whom the whole is new and simultaneous. The case must then be thus stated. Put aside the fact of the previous acquaintance with the Christabel—suppose that no circumstances were known, that rendered it probable—would the resemblances in and of themselves have enforced, or at least have generally *suggested*, the suspicion that [the] later Poem was an intentional Imitation of the elder? In other words, is the general Likeness, or [anything] in the particular resemblances, such as a liberal and enlightened Reader could not with any probability consider, as the result of mere Coincidence between two writers of similar Pursuits, and (*argumenti causâ loquor*) of nearly equal Talent. Coincidence is here used as a negative—not as implying, that the Likeness between the works is merely accidental, the effect of chance, but as asserting that it is not the effect of imitation. Now how far Coincidence in this sense and under the supposed Conditions is possible, I can myself supply an instance, which happened at my lectures in Flower de Luce Court only last week, and the accuracy of which does not rely on *my* evidence only, but can be proved by the separate testimony of some hundred individuals—that is, by as many as have attended and retained any distinct recollection of my lectures at the Royal Institution or at Fetter Lane. After the

close of my lecture on Romeo and Juliet, a German gentleman, a Mr. Bernard Krusve, introduced himself to me, and after some courteous Compliments said, "Were it not almost impossible, I must have believed that you had either heard or read, my countryman Schlegel's lecture on this play, given at Vienna: the principles, thought, and the very illustrations are so nearly the same. But the lectures were but just published as I left Germany, scarcely more than a week since, and the only two copies of the work in England I have reason to think, that I myself have brought over. One I retain: the other is at Mr. Boosey's." I replied that I had not even heard of these lectures, nor had indeed seen any work of Schlegel's except a volume of Translations from Spanish Poetry, which the Baron Von Humboldt had lent me when I was at Rome—one piece of which, a translation of a Play of Calderon, I had compared with the original, and formed in consequence a high opinion of Schlegel's Taste and Genius. A Friend standing by me added, This cannot be a question of Dates, Sir; for if the gentleman, whose name you have mentioned. first gave his lectures at Vienna in 1810, I can myself bear witness, that I heard Mr. Coleridge deliver all the *substance* of to-night's lecture at the Royal Institution some years before. The next morning, Mr. Krusve called on me and made me a present of the book; and as much as the Resemblance of the L. of L.M. fell below the anticipations which the accounts of others were calculated to excite, so much did this book transcend—not in one lecture, but in all the lectures that related to Shakespeare or to the stage in general, the Grounds, Train of Reasoning, etc., were different in language only—and often not even in that. The Thoughts too were so far peculiar, that to the best of my knowledge they did not exist in any prior work of criticism. Yet I was far more flattered, or to speak more truly, I was more confirmed, than surprise[d]. For Schlegel and myself had both studied deeply and perseverantly the philosophy of Kant, the

distinguishing feature of which [is] to treat every subject in reference to the operation of the mental Faculties, to which it specially appertains—and to commence by the cautious discrimination of what is essential, i.e. explicable by mere consideration of the Faculties in themselves, from what is empirical, i.e. the modifying or disturbing Forces of Time, Place, and Circumstances. Suppose myself and Schlegel (my argument not my vanity, leads to these seeming Self-flatteries) nearly equal in natural powers, of similar pursuits and acquirements, and it is only necessary for both to have mastered the spirit of Kant's *Critique of the Judgment* to render it morally certain, that writing on the same subject we should draw the same conclusions by the same brains, from the same principles, write to one purpose and with one spirit. "

Now, Sir! apply this to Mr. W. Scott. If his Poem had been in any sense a borrowed thing, it's Elements likewise would surely be assumed, not nature. But no insect was ever more like in the color of it's skin and juices to the leaf, it fed on, than Scott's Muse is to Scott himself. Habitually conversant with the antiquities of his Country, and of all Europe during the ruder periods of society, living as it were, in whatever is found in them imposing either to the Fancy or interesting to the Feelings, passionately fond of natural Scenery, abundant in local anecdote, and besides learned in

*"all the antique scrolls of Faery land,
"Processions, Tournaments, Spells, Chivalry" —*

in all languages, from Apuleius to "Tam o'Shanter"—how else or what else could he have been expected to write? His Poems are evidently the indigenous Products of his mind and Habits.

But I have wearied myself, and shall weary you. I will only add that I have a volume of Poems now before me, completely made up of gross plagiarisms from Akenside, Thomson,

Bowles, Southey, and the Lyrical Ballads—it is curious to observe, how many artifices the poor author has used to disguise the theft, transposition, dilutions, substitutions of Synonyms, etc., etc.,—and yet not the least resemblance to any one of the Poets whom he pillaged. He who can catch the spirit of an original, has it already. It will not [be] by Dates, that Posterity will judge of the originality of a Poem; but by the original spirit itself. This is to be found neither in a Tale however interesting, which is but the Canvas; no, nor yet in the Fancy or the Imagery—which are but Forms and Colors—it is a subtle Spirit, all in each part, reconciling and unifying all. Passion and Imagination are it's *most* appropriate names; but even these say little—for it must be not merely Passion but poetic Passion, poetic Imagination.

[No conclusion or signature.]

92. To William Wordsworth.

71, Berners Street, Monday, May 4, 1812.

I will divide my statement, which I will endeavour to send you to-morrow, into two parts, in separate letters. The latter, commencing from the Sunday night, 28 October 1810, that is, that on which the communication was made to me, and which will contain my solemn avowal of what was said by Mr. and Mrs. Montagu, you will make what use of you please—but the former I write to *you*, and in *confidence*—yet only as far as to your own heart it shall appear evident, that in desiring it I am actuated by no wish to shrink personally from any test, not involving an acknowledgement of my own degradation, and so become a false witness against myself, but only by delicacy towards the feelings of others, and the dread of spreading the curse of dissension. But, Wordsworth!

1812 the very message you sent by Lamb and which *Lamb* did not deliver to me from the anxiety not to add fuel to the flame, sufficiently proves what I had learnt on my first arrival at Keswick, and which alone prevented my going to Grasmere—namely, that you had prejudged the case. As soon as I was informed that you had denied having used certain expressions, I did not hesitate a moment (nor was it in my power to do so) to give you my fullest faith, and approve to my own consciousness the truth of my declaration, that I should have felt it as, a blessing, though my life had the same instant been hazarded as the pledge, could I with firm conviction have given Montagu the lie, at the conclusion of his story, even as, at the very first sentence, I exclaimed—"Impossible! It is impossible!" The expressions denied were indeed only the most offensive part to the feelings—but at the same time I learnt that you did not hesitate instantly to express your conviction that Montagu never said those words and that I had invented them—or (to use your own words) "had forgotten myself." Grievously indeed, if I know aught of my nature, must I have forgotten both myself and common honesty, could I have been villain enough to have invented and persevered in such atrocious falsehoods. Your message was that "if I declined an explanation, you begged I would no longer continue to talk about the affair." When, Wordsworth, did I ever decline an explanation? From you I expected one, and had a right to expect it—for let Montagu have added what he may, still that which remained was most unkind and what I had little deserved from you, who might by a single question have learnt from me that I never made up my mind to lodge with Montagu and had tacitly acquiesced in it at Keswick to tranquillise Mrs. Coleridge, to whom Mrs. Montagu had made the earnest professions of watching and nursing me, and for whom this and her extreme repugnance to my original, and much wiser, resolution of going to Edinburgh

and placing myself in the house, and under the constant eye, of some medical man, were the sole grounds of her assent that I should leave the North at all. Yet at least a score of times 1812 have I begun to write a detailed account, to Wales and afterwards to Grasmere, and gave it up from excess of agitation,—till finally I learnt that *all* of your family had decided against me unheard—and that [you begged] *I would no longer talk about it*. If, Wordsworth, you had but done me the common justice of asking those with whom I have been most intimate and confidential since my first arrival in Town in Oct., 1810, you would have received other negative or positive proofs how little I needed the admonition or deserve the sarcasm. Talk about it? O God! it *has* been talked about! and that it had, was the sole occasion of my disclosing it even to Mary Lamb, the first person who heard of it from me and that not voluntarily—but the morning a friend met me, and communicated what so agitated me that then having previously meant to call at Lamb's I was compelled to do so from faintness and universal trembling, in order to sit down. Even to her I did not intend to mention it; but alarmed by the wildness and paleness of my countenance and agitation I had no power to conceal, she entreated me to tell her what was the matter. In the first attempt to speak, my feelings overpowered me; an agony of weeping followed, and then, alarmed at my own imprudence and conscious of the possible effect on her health and mind if I left her in that state of suspense, I brought out convulsively some such words as—"Wordsworth, Wordsworth has given me up. *He* has no hope of me—I have been an absolute nuisance in his family"—and when long weeping had relieved me, and I was able to relate the occurrence connectedly, she can bear witness for me that, disgraceful as it was that I should be made the topic of vulgar gossip, yet that "had the whole and ten times more been proclaimed by a speaking-trumpet from the chimneys, I should have smiled at it—or

1812 indulged indignation only as far as it excited me to pleasurable activity—but that *you* had said it, this and this only, was the sting! the scorpion-tooth!” Mr. Morgan and afterwards his wife and her sister were made acquainted with the whole case—and why? Not merely that I owed it to their ardent friendship, which has continued to be mainly my comfort and my only support, but because they had already heard of it, in part—because a most intimate and dear friend of Mr. and Mrs. Montagu’s had urged Mr. Morgan, to call at the Montagus in order to be put on his guard against me. He came to me instantly, told me that I had enemies at work against my character, and pressed me to leave the hotel and to come home with him—with whom I have been ever since, with the exception of a few intervals when, from the bitter consciousness of my own infirmities and increasing irregularity of temper, I took lodgings, against his will, and was always by his zealous friendship brought back again. If it be allowed to call any one on earth Saviour, Morgan and his family have been my Saviours, body and soul. For my moral will was, and I fear is, so weakened relatively to my duties to myself, that I cannot act, as I ought to do, except under the influencing knowledge of its effects on those I love and believe myself loved by . . .

93. To Josiah Wedgwood

This letter is Coleridge’s reply to a letter in which Josiah Wedgwood asked Coleridge’s permission to discontinue his share of the annuity granted by Tom and Josiah Wedgwood in 1798. “My circumstances are now so much changed that the payment of my share of that sum annually, diminishes my capital”—so Josiah Wedgwood had written. To a man who had recently suffered a loss of £121,000 there was doubtless some psychological compensation in discontinuing an allowance of £75 per-annum to a man who had never had £121,000 to lose.

71, Berners Street,
Oxford Street,
December 1, 1812. 1812

DEAR SIR

I should deem myself indeed unworthy of your and your revered Brother's^{*} past munificence, if I had had any other feeling than that of Grief from your letter: or if I looked forward to any other or higher Comfort, than the confident Hope that (if God extend my life another year) I shall have a claim to an acknowledgement from you, that I have not misemployed my past years, or wasted that leisure which I have owed to you, and for which I must cease to be before I can cease to feel most grateful. Permit me to assure you, that had *The Friend* succeeded instead of bringing on me embarrassment and a loss of more than 200*l*. from the non-payment of the Subscriptions, or had my lectures done more than merely pay my Board in town, it was my intention to have resigned my claims on your Bounty—and I am sure, that I shall have your good wishes in my behalf, when I tell you that I have had a Play accepted at Drury Lane, which is to come out at Christmas, and of the success of which both Manager, Comm.-Men, and actors speak sanguinely. If I succeed in this, it will not only open out a smooth and not dishonorable road to competence, but give me heart and spirits (still more necessary than time) to bring into shape the fruits of 20 years study and observation.

Cruelly, I well know, have I been calumniated: and even my faults (the sinking under the sense of which has been itself perhaps one of the greatest) have been attributed to dispositions absolutely opposite to the real ones—and—and I beseech you, interpret it as a burst of thankfulness and most unfeigned esteem, not of pride, when I declare that to have an annuity settled on me of three times or thrice three times the amount,

would not afford me such pleasure, as the restoration of your esteem and Friendship

1812

for your deeply obliged

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S. Since the receipt of your letter I have been confined by illness, till last Tuesday, with a nervous depression that rendered me incapable of answering it, or rather fearful of trusting myself.

94. To William Wordsworth

This letter was written on the occasion of the death of Wordsworth's son Thomas.

71, Berners Street,

Monday noon, December 7, 1812.

Write? My dear Friend! Oh that it were in my power to be with you myself instead of my letter. The Lectures I could give up; but the rehearsal of my Play commences this week, and upon this depends my best hopes of leaving town after Christmas, and living among you as long as I live. Strange, strange are the coincidences of things! Yesterday Martha Fricker dined here, and after tea I had asked question after question respecting your children, first one, then the other; but, more than all, concerning Thomas, till at length Mrs. Morgan said, "What ails you Coleridge? Why don't you talk about Hartley, Derwent, and Sara?" And not two hours ago (for the whole family were late from bed) I was asked what was the matter with my eyes? I told the fact, that I had awoke three times during the night and morning, and at each time found my face and part of the pillow wet with tears. "Were you dreaming of the Wordsworths?" she asked—"Of the children?" I said, "No! not so much of them, but of Mrs. W. and Miss Hutchinson, and yourself and sister."

Mrs. Morgan and her sister are come in, and I have been relieved by tears. The sharp, sharp pang at the heart needed it, when they reminded me of my words the very yester-night: 1812
“It is not possible that I should do otherwise than love Wordsworth’s children, all of them; but Tom is nearest my heart—I so often have him before my eyes, sitting on the little stool by my side, while I was writing my essays; and how quiet and happy the affectionate little fellow would be if he could but touch one, and now and then be looked at.”

O dearest friend! what comfort can I afford you? What comfort ought I not to afford, who have given you so much pain? Sympathy deep, of my whole being . . . In grief, and in joy, in the anguish of perplexity, and in the fulness and overflow of confidence, it has been ever what it is! There is a sense of the word, Love, in which I never felt it but to you and one of your household! I am distant from you some hundred miles, but glad I am that I am no longer distant in spirit, and have faith, that as it has happened but once, so it never can happen again. An awful truth it seems to me, and prophetic of our future, as well as declarative of our present *real* nature, that one mere thought, one feeling of suspicion, jealousy, or resentment can remove two human beings farther from each other than winds or seas can separate their bodies . . .

95. To Thomas Poole

February 13, 1813. ..

DEAR POOLE,

Love so deep and so domesticated with the whole being, as mine was to you, can never cease *to be*. To quote the best and sweetest lines I ever wrote:—

Alas! they had been Friends in Youth!
But whisp'ring Tongues can poison Truth;
And Constancy lives in Realms above;
And Life is thorny; and Youth is vain:
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work, like Madness, in the Brain!
And so it chanced (as I divine)
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high Disdain
And Insult to his heart's best Brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow Heart from Paining—
They stood aloof, the Scars remaining,
Like Cliffs, which had been rent asunder,
A dreary Sea now flows between!—
But neither Frost, nor Heat, nor Thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been!

Stung as I have been with your unkindness to me, in my sore adversity, yet the receipt of your two heart-engendered lines was sweeter than an unexpected strain of sweetest music, or, in humbler phrase, it was the only pleasurable sensation which the *success of the "Remorse"* has given me. I have read of, or perhaps only imagined, a punishment in Arabia, in which the culprit was so bricked up as to be unable to turn his eyes to the right or the left, while in front was placed a high heap of barren sand glittering under the vertical sun. Some slight analogue of this, I have myself suffered from the mere unusualness of having my attention forcibly directed to a subject which permitted neither sequence of imagery, or series of reasoning. No grocer's apprentice, after his first month's permitted riot, was ever sicker of figs and raisins

than I of hearing about the "Remorse." The endless rat-a-tat-tat at our black-and-blue-bruised door, and my three master-fiends, proof sheets, letters (for I have a raging epistolophobia), and worse than these—invitations to large dinners, which I cannot refuse without offence and imputation of pride, or accept without disturbance of temper the day before, and a sick, aching stomach for two days after, so that my spirits quite sink under it. 1813

From what I myself saw, and from what an intelligent friend, more solicitous about it than myself, has told me, the "Remorse" has succeeded in spite of bad scenes, execrable acting, and newspaper calumny. In my compliments to the actors, I endeavoured (such is the lot of this world, in which our best qualities tilt against each other, *ex. gr.*, our good nature against our veracity) to make a lie edge round the truth as nearly as possible. Poor Rae (why poor? for Ordonio has almost made his fortune) did the best in his power, and is a good man . . . a moral and affectionate husband and father. But nature has denied him person and all volume and depth of voice; so that the blundering coxcomb Filliston, by mere dint of voice and self-conceit, out-dazzled him. It has been a good thing for the theatre. They will get £8,000 or £10,000, and I shall get more than all my literary labours put together; nay, thrice as much, subtracting my heavy losses in the "Watchman" and "Friend,"—£400 including the copyright.

You will have heard that, previous to the acceptance of "Remorse," Mr. Jos. Wedgwood had withdrawn from his share of the annuity! Well, yes, it is well!—for I can now be *sure* that I loved him, revered him, and was grateful to him from no selfish feeling. For equally (and may these words be my final condemnation at the last awful day, if I speak not the whole truth), equally do I at this moment love him, and with the same reverential gratitude! To Mr. Thomas Wedgwood I felt, doubtless, love; but it was mingled with fear, and

constant apprehension of his too exquisite taste in morals.
But Josiah! Oh, I ever did, and ever shall, love him, as a being
1813 so beautifully balanced in mind and heart deserves to be!

'T is well, too, because it has given me the strongest impulse,
the most imperious motive I have experienced, to *prove* to him
that his past munificence has not been *wasted*!

You perhaps may likewise have heard (*in the Whispering
Gallery of the World*) of the year-long difference between me
and Wordsworth (compared with the sufferings of which all
the former afflictions of my life were less than flea-bites),
occasioned (*in great part*) by the wicked folly of the arch-fool
Montagu.

A reconciliation has taken place, but the *feeling*, which I had
previous to that moment, when the (three-fourth) calumny
burst, like a thunderstorm from a blue sky, on my soul, after
fifteen years of such religious, almost superstitious idolatry
and self-sacrifice. Oh, no! no! that, I fear, never can return.
All outward actions, all inward wishes, all thoughts and
admiration will be the same—are the same, but—aye, there
remains an immedicable *But*. Had W. said (what he acknow-
ledges to have said) to you, I should have thought it unkind,
and have had a right to say, "Why, why am I, whose whole
being has been like a glass beehive before you for five years,
why do I hear this from a *third* person for the first time?"
But to such . . . as Montagu just when W. himself had fore-
warned me! Oh! it cut me to the heart's core.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

96. To Joseph Cottle

*Coleridge is writing in reply to a letter from Cottle on the subject
of Coleridge's opium taking. Cottle wrote that he was "afflicted to
perceive that Satan is so busy with you, but God is greater than Satan.*

Did you ever hear of Jesus Christ?" It is fatally easy to blame those guilty of sins of the flesh, while the greater sins of want of charity, self-satisfaction, and hypocrisy can masquerade as virtues. To us it seems clear enough that Coleridge suffered and battled with spiritual terrors to emerge in his later years as a great soul who had journeyed not without heroism through the fires of his own purgatory. 1814

April 26, 1814.

You have poured oil in the raw and festering Wound of an old friend's Conscience, Cottle! but it is oil of Vitriol! I but barely glanced at the middle of the first page of your Letter, and have seen no more of it—not from resentment (God forbid!) but from the state of my bodily and mental sufferings, that scarcely permitted human fortitude to let in a new visitor of affliction. The object of my present reply is to state the case just as it is—first, that for years the anguish of my spirit has been indescribable, the sense of my danger *staring*, but the conscience of my *guilt* worse, far far worse than all—I have prayed with drops of agony on my Brow, trembling not only before the Justice of my Maker, but even before the Mercy of my Redeemer. "I gave thee so many Talents. What hast thou done with them?"— Secondly—that it is false and cruel to say, (overwhelmed as I am with the sense of my dreadful Infirmary) that I attempt or ever have attempted to *disguise* or conceal the cause. On the contrary, not only to friends have I stated the whole case with tears and the very bitterness of shame; but in two instances I have warned young men, mere acquaintances who had spoken of having taken Laudanum, of the direful consequences, by an ample exposition of it's tremendous effects on myself—Thirdly, tho' before God I dare not lift up my eyelids, and only do not despair of his Mercy because to despair would be adding crime to crime; yet to my fellow-men I may say, that I was seduced into the *accursed* Habit ignorantly.

I had been almost bed-ridden for many months with swellings in my knees—in a medical Journal I unhappily met with an account of a cure performed in a similar case (or what to me appeared so) by rubbing in of Laudanum, at the same time taking a given dose internally. It acted like a charm, like a miracle! I recovered the use of my Limbs, of my appetite, of my Spirits—and this continued for near a fortnight—At length, the unusual stimulus subsided—the complaint returned—the supposed remedy was recurred to—but I can not go thro’ the dreary history—suffice it to say, that effects were produced, which acted on me by *Terror* and *Cowardice* of *Pain* and sudden Death, not (so help me God!) by any Temptation of Pleasure, or expectation or desire of exciting pleasurable sensations. On the very contrary, Mrs. Morgan and her Sister will bear witness so far, as to say that the longer I abstained, the higher my spirits were, the keener my enjoyments—till the moment, the direful moment, arrived, when my pulse began to fluctuate, my Heart to palpitate, and such a dreadful *falling-abroad* as it were of my whole frame, such intolerable Restlessness and incipient Bewilderment, that in the last of my several attempts to abandon the dire poison, I exclaimed in agony, what I now repeat in seriousness and solemnity—“I am too poor to hazard this! Had I but a few hundred Pounds, but 200£, half to send to Mrs. Coleridge, and half to place myself in a private mad-house, where I could procure nothing but what a Physician thought proper, and where a medical attendant could be constantly with me for two or three months (in less than that time Life or Death would be determined) then there might be Hope. Now there is none!”—O God! how willingly would I place myself under Dr. Fox in his Establishment—for my Case is a species of madness, only that it is a derangement, an utter impotence of the *Volition*, and not of the intellectual Faculties—You bid me rouse myself—go, bid a man paralytic in both arms rub them briskly together, and that will cure him.

Alas! (he would reply) that I cannot move my arms is my complaint and my misery.——

My friend, Wade, is not at home—and I sent off all the little money, I had—or I would with this have included the 10*l* received from you. 1814

May God bless you

and

Your affectionate and

Most afflicted S. T. COLERIDGE.

Dr. Estlin, I found, is raising the city against me, as far as he and his friends can, for having stated a mere matter of fact, viz.—that Milton had represented Satan as a sceptical Socinian—which is the case, and I could not have explained the excellence of the sublimest single Passage in all his writings had I not previously informed the Audience, that Milton had represented Satan as knowing the prophetic and Messianic Character of Christ, but was sceptical as to any higher Claims—and what other definition could Dr. E. himself give of a sceptical Socinian? Now that M. has done so, please to consult, Par. Regained, Book IV. from line 196,—and then the same book from line 500.

97. To Charles Mathews

2, Queen's Square, Bristol,

May 30, 1814.

. . . I once had the presumption to address this advice to an actor on the London stage: "*Think*, in order that you may be able to *observe! Observe*, in order that you may have materials to think upon! And thirdly, keep awake ever the habit of instantly *embodying* and *realising* the results of the two; but always *think!*"

1814 A great actor, comic or tragic, is not to be a mere copy, a *fac simile*, or but an *imitation*, of Nature. Now an imitation differs from a copy in this, that it of necessity implies and demands *difference*, whereas a copy aims at *identity*. What a marble peach on a mantelpiece, that you take up deluded and put down with pettish disgust, is, compared with a fruit-piece of Vanhuyser's, even such is a mere *copy* of nature compared with a true histrionic *imitation*. A good actor is Pygmalion's Statue, a work of exquisite *art*, animated and gifted with *motion*; but still *art*, still a species of *poetry*.

Not the least advantage which an actor gains by having secured a high reputation is this, that those who sincerely admire him may dare tell him the truth at times, and thus, if he have sensible friends, secure his progressive improvement; in other words, keep him thinking. For without thinking, nothing consummate can be effected.

Accept this, dear sir, as it is meant, a small testimony of the high gratification I have received from you and of the respectful and sincere kind wishes with which I am

Your obedient

S. T. COLERIDGE.

—Mathews, Esq., to be left at the Bristol Theatre.

98. To Josiah Wade

Bristol, June 26, 1814.

DEAR SIR,

For I am unworthy to call any good man friend—much less you, whose hospitality and love I have abused; accept, however, my intreaties for your forgiveness, and for your prayers.

Conceive a poor miserable wretch, who for many years has been attempting to beat off pain, by a constant recurrence to the

vice that reproduces it. Conceive a spirit in hell, employed in tracing out for others the road to that heaven, from which his crimes exclude him! In short, conceive whatever is most 1814 wretched, helpless, and hopeless, and you will form as tolerable a notion of my state, as it is possible for a good man to have.

I used to think the text in St. James that "he who offended in one point, offends in all," very harsh; but I now feel the awful, the tremendous truth of it. In the one crime of OPIUM, what crime have I not made myself guilty of!—Ingatitude to my Maker! and to my benefactors—injustice! and *unnatural cruelty to my poor children!*—self-contempt for my repeated promise—breach, nay, too often, actual falsehood!

After my death, I earnestly entreat, that a full and unqualified narration of my wretchedness, and of its guilty cause, may be made public, that at least some little good may be effected by the direful example.

May God Almighty bless you, and have mercy on your still affectionate, and in his heart, grateful

S. T. COLERIDGE.

99. To John Murray

Coleridge never did, in fact, make the translation of Faust proposed by Murray.

Ashley, Box, Bath.

September 10, 1814.

DEAR SIR

I cannot persuade myself, that I can have offended you by my openness. I think the "Faust" a work of genius, of genuine and original Genius. The Scenes in the Cathedral and in the

1814 Prison must delight and affect all Readers not pre-determined to dislike. But the Scenes of Witchery and that astonishing Witch-Gallop up the Brocken will be denounced as *fantastic* and absurd. Fantastic they *are*, and were meant to be; but I need not tell you, how many will detect the supposed fault for one, who can enter into it. I have shewn ~~to~~ the full conviction of no small number among our first rate men that every one of the Faults so wildly charged on the Hamlet by the Decriers of Shakespeare, and palliated even by his admirers only on the score of their being overbalanced by it's Beauties, forms an essential part of the essential Excellence of that marvellous *Plenum* of the myriad-minded man—a bold phrase, which I have transferred from a Patriarch of Constantinople, to whom it had been applied by a Greek Monk. In my Essay I meant to have given a full tho' compressed critical account of the 4 stages of German Poetry from Hans Sachs to Tieck and Schlegel, who with Goethe are the living Stars, that are now culminant on the German Parnassus. In reference to the *Labor* and to the Quantity of thoughtful Reading I deemed the price inadequate; not as less than you were justified in offering. I trust, however, to hear from you at all events. I have left Bristol for a Cottage 5 miles from Bath, in order to be perfectly out of the Reach of Interruption.

There are, however, two Works, which I could dare confidently recommend to you for Translation—the first, the minor works of Cervantes, namely his novels, his divine Galathea, his Persiles, Numancia, a Tragedy, and his humorous voyage to Parnassus – 6 volumes in Spanish, but which might be printed in 3 sizable octavos in English. I will not say, that they are equal altogether to Don Quixote. What indeed is? What can be? But I will dare affirm, that in their *kind* they are equal, and of most consummate Excellence. A middle thing between the Novel and the Romance, they are more natural than the latter more elevated and of more permanent Interest

than the former—and with all the charms of the most delicious poetry in the most unaffected melody of Prose they may be re-perused for the 20th time with added pleasure. The second, 1814 the Prose Works of Boccaccio, excluding the Decameron—these two are of the same class as the above mentioned of Cervantes, but I dare affirm them far more interesting, affecting, and eloquent than the Decameron itself—and if less amusing, yet (if there be no contradiction in saying so) more entertaining. Either of these works I would undertake at any moderate price. Pray let me hear from you—Your obliged

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Direct to Mr. B. Morgan, [*sic*] Chemist, Bridge Street, Bath for Mr. Coleridge. I am at a Mrs. Smith's, Ashley, Box, Bath.

100. To Daniel Stuart

Mr. Smith's, Ashley, Box, near Bath.

September 12, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR,

I wrote some time ago to Mr. Smith, earnestly requesting your address, and entreating him to inform you of the dreadful state in which I was, when your kind letter must have arrived, during your stay at Bath . . . But let me not complain. I ought to be and I trust I am, grateful for what I am, having escaped with my intellectual powers, if less elastic, yet not less vigorous, and with ampler and far more solid materials to exert them on. We know nothing even of ourselves, till we know *ourselves* to be as nothing (a solemn truth, spite of point and antithesis, in which the thought has chanced to *word* itself)! From this *word* of truth which the sore discipline of a sick bed has compacted into an indwelling reality, from

this article, formerly, of *speculative belief*, but which [circumstances] have actualised into *practical faith*, I have learned to counteract calumny by self-reproach, and not only to rejoice (as indeed from natural disposition, from the very constitution of my heart, I should have done at all periods of my life) at the temporal prosperity, and increased and increasing reputation of my old fellow-labourers in philosophical, political, and poetical literature, but to bear their neglect, and even their detraction, *as if I had done nothing at all*, when it would have asked no very violent strain of recollection for one or two of them to have considered, whether some part of *their* most successful *somethings* were not among the *nothings* of my intellectual no-doings. But all strange things are less strange than the sense of intellectual obligations. Seldom do I ever see a Review, yet almost as often as that seldomness permits have I smiled at finding myself attacked in strains of thought which would never have occurred to the writer, had he not directly or indirectly learned them from myself. This is among the salutary effects, even of the dawn of actual religion on the mind, that we begin to reflect on our duties to God and to ourselves as permanent beings, and not to flatter ourselves by a superficial auditing of our negative duties to our neighbours, or mere acts *in transitu* to the transitory. I have too sad an account to settle between myself that is and has been, and myself that *can* not cease to be, to allow me a single complaint that, for all my labours in behalf of truth against the Jacobin party, then against military despotism abroad, against weakness and despondency and faction and factious goodness at home, I have never received from those in power even a verbal acknowledgment; though by mere reference to dates, it might be proved that no small number of fine speeches in the House of Commons, and elsewhere, originated, directly or indirectly, in my Essays and conversations. I dare assert, that the science of reasoning and judging concerning the productions of

literature, the characters and measures of public men, and the events of nations, by a systematic subsumption of them, under PRINCIPLES, deduced from the nature of MAN, and that of prophesying concerning the future (in contradiction to the hopes or fears of the majority) by a careful cross-examination of some period, the most analogous in past history, as learnt from contemporary authorities, and the proportioning of the ultimate event to the likenesses as modified or counteracted by the differences, was as good as unknown in the public prints, before the year 1795-96. Earl Darnley, on the appearance of my letters in the "Courier" concerning the Spaniards, bluntly asked me, whether I had lost my senses, and quoted Lord Grenville at me. If you should happen to cast your eye over my character of Pitt, my two letters to Fox, my Essays on the French Empire under Buonaparte, compared with the Roman, under the first Emperors; that on the probability of the restoration of the Bourbons, and those on Ireland, and Catholic Emancipation (which last unfortunately remain for the greater part in manuscript, Mr. Street not relishing them), and should add to them my Essays in "The Friend" on Taxation, and the supposed effects of war on our commercial prosperity; those on international law in defence of our siege of Copenhagen; and if you had before you the long letter which I wrote to Sir G. Beaumont in 1806, concerning the inevitableness of a war with America, and the specific dangers of that war, if not provided against by specific pre-arrangements; with a list of their Frigates, so called, with their size, number, and weight of metal, the characters of their commanders, and the proportion suspected of British seamen.—I have luckily a copy of it, a rare accident with me.—I dare amuse myself, I say, with the belief, that by far the better half of all these, would read to you now, AS HISTORY. And what have I got for all this? What for my first daring to blow the trumpet of sound philosophy against the Lancastrian

faction? The answer is not complex. Unthanked, and left worse than defenceless, by the friends of the Government and the Establishment, to be undermined or outraged by all the malice, hatred, and calumny of its enemies; and to think and toil, with a patent for all the abuse, and a transfer to others of all the honours. In the "Quarterly" Review of the "Remorse" (delayed till it could by no possibility be of the least service to me, and the compliments in which are as senseless and silly as the censures; every fault ascribed to it, being either no improbability at all, or from the very essence and end of the drama no DRAMATIC Improbability, without noticing any one of the REAL faults, and there are many glaring, and one or two DEADLY sins in the tragedy)—in this Review, I am abused, and insolently reprovèd as a man, with reference to my supposed private habits, for NOT PUBLISHING. Would to heaven I never had! To this very moment I am embarrassed and tormented, in consequence of the non-payment of the subscribers to "The Friend." But I *could* rebut the charge; and not merely say, but prove, that there is not a man in England, whose thoughts, images, words, and erudition have been published in larger quantities than *mine*; though I must admit, not *by*, or *for*, myself. Believe me, if I felt any pain from these things, I should not make this *exposé*; for it is constitutional with me, to *shrink* from all talk or communication of what gnaws within me. And, if I felt any real anger, I should not do what I fully intend to do, publish two long satires, in Drydenic verse, entitled "Puff and Slander." But I seem to myself to have endured the hootings and peltings, and "Go up bald head" (2 Kings, ch. ii. vs. 23, 24) quite long enough; and shall therefore send forth my two she-bears, to tear in pieces the most obnoxious of these ragged CHILDREN in intellect; and to scare the rest of these mischievous little mud-larks back to their crevice-nests, and lurking holes. While those who know me best, spite of my many infirmities, love

me best, I am determined, henceforward, to treat my unprovoked enemies in the spirit of the Tiberian adage, *Oderint modo timeant*.

1814

And now, having for the very first time in my whole life opened out my whole feelings and thoughts concerning my past fates and fortunes, I will draw anew on your patience, by a detail of my present operations. My medical friend is so well satisfied of my convalescence, and that nothing now remains, but to superinduce *positive* health on a system from which disease and its *removable* causes have been driven out, that he has not merely consented to, but advised my leaving Bristol, for some rural retirement. I could indeed pursue nothing uninterruptedly in that city. Accordingly, I am now joint tenant with Mr. Morgan, of a sweet little cottage, at Ashley, half a mile from Box, on the Bath road. I breakfast every morning before nine; work till one, and walk or read till three. Thence, till tea-time, chat or read some lounge book, or correct what I have written. From six to eight work again; from eight till bed-time, play whist, or the little mock billiard called bagatelle, and then sup, and go to bed. My morning hours, as the longest and most important division, I keep sacred to my most important Work, which is printing at Bristol; two of my friends having taken upon themselves the risk. It is so long since I have conversed with you, that I cannot say, whether the subject will, or will not be interesting to you. The title is "Christianity, the one true Philosophy; or, Five Treatises on the Logos, or Communicative Intelligence, natural, human, and divine." To which is prefixed a prefatory Essay, on the laws and limits of toleration and liberality, illustrated by fragments of Auto-biography. The *first* Treatise—Logos Propaideuticus, or the Science of systematic thinking in ordinary life. The *second*—Logos Architectonicus, or an attempt to apply the constructive or Mathematical process to Metaphysics and Natural Theology. The *third*—

1814 (1) Λόγος ὁ θεάνθρωπος (the divine logos incarnate)—a full commentary on the Gospel of St. John, in development of St. Paul's doctrine of preaching Christ alone, and Him crucified. The *fourth*—on Spinoza and Spinozism, with a life of B. Spinoza. This entitled Logos Agonistes. The *fifth* and last, Logos Alogos (*i.e.*, Logos Illogicus), or on modern Unitarianism, its causes and effects. The whole will be comprised in two portly octavos, and the second treatise will be the only one which will, and from the nature of the subject must, be unintelligible to the great majority even of well educated readers. The purpose of the whole is a philosophical defence of the Articles of the Church, as far as they respect doctrine, as points of faith. If originality be any merit, this Work will have that, at all events, from the first page to the last . . .

101. To Daniel Stuart

"October 30, 1814."

. . . Of course I immediately recognised your hand in the Article concerning the "Edinburgh Review," and much pleased I was with it; and equally so in finding, from your letter, that we had so completely coincided in our feelings, concerning that wicked Lord Nelson Article. If there be one thing on earth that can outrage an honest man's feelings, it is the assumption of austere morality for the purposes of personal slander. And the gross ingratitude of the attack! In the name of God what have we to do with Lord Nelson's mistresses, or domestic quarrels? Sir A. Ball, himself exemplary in this respect, told me of his own personal knowledge Lady Nelson was enough to drive any man wild. . . . She had no sympathy with his acute sensibilities, and his alienation was effected, though not shown, before he knew Lady Hamilton, by being *heart-starved*, still more than by being teased and

tormented by her sullenness. Observe that Sir A. Ball detested Lady Hamilton. To the same enthusiastic sensibilities which made a fool of him with regard to his Emma, his country owed 1814 the victories of the Nile, Copenhagen, and Trafalgar, and the heroic spirit of all the officers reared under him .

102. To Lady Beaumont

April 3, 1815.

. . . Of "The Excursion," excluding the tale of the ruined cottage, which I have ever thought the finest poem in our language, comparing it with any of the same or similar *length*, I can truly say that one half the number of its beauties would make all the beauties of all his contemporary poets collectively mount to the balance:—but yet—the fault may be in my own mind— I do not think, I did not feel, it equal to the work on the growth of his own spirit. As proofs meet me in every part of "The Excursion" that the poet's genius has not flagged, I have sometimes fancied that, having by the conjoint operation of his own experiences, feelings, and reason, *himself* convinced *himself* of truths, which the generality of persons have either taken for granted from their infancy, or, at least, adopted in early life, he has attached all their own depth and weight to doctrines and words, which come almost as truisms or commonplaces to others . . .

103. To William Wordsworth

Calne, May 30, 1815.

. . . Whatever in Lucretius is poetry is not philosophical, whatever is philosophical is not poetry; and in the very pride of confident hope I looked forward to "The Recluse" as the

1815 *first and only* true philosophical poem in existence. Of course, I expected the colours, music, imaginative life, and passion of *poetry*; but the matter and arrangement of *philosophy*; not doubting from the advantages of the subject that the totality of a system was not only capable of being harmonised with, but even calculated to aid, the unity (beginning, middle, and end) of a poem. Thus, whatever the length of the work might be, still it was a *determinate* length; of the subjects announced, each would have its own appointed place, and, excluding repetitions, each would relieve and rise in interest above the other. I supposed you first to have meditated the faculties of man in the abstract, in their correspondence with his sphere of action, and, first in the feeling, touch, and taste, then in the eye, and last in the ear,—to have laid a solid and immovable foundation for the edifice by removing the sandy sophisms of Locke, and the mechanic dogmatists, and demonstrating that the senses were living growths and developments of the mind and spirit, in a much juster as well as higher sense, than the mind can be said to be formed by the senses. Next, I understood that you would take the human race in the concrete, have exploded the absurd notion of Pope's "Essay on Man," Darwin, and all the countless believers even (strange to say) among Christians of man's having progressed from an orang-outang state—so contrary to all history, to all religion, nay, to all possibility—to have affirmed a Fall in some sense, as a fact, the possibility of which cannot be understood from the nature of the will, but the reality of which is attested by experience and conscience. Fallen men contemplated in the different ages of the world, and in the different states—savage, barbarous, civilised, the lonely cot, or borderer's wigwam, the village, the manufacturing town, seaport, city, universities, and, not disguising the sore evils under which the whole creation groans, to point out, however, a manifest scheme of redemption, of reconciliation from this enmity with Nature—

what are the obstacles, the *Antichrist* that must be and already is—and to conclude by a grand didactic swell on the necessary identity of a true philosophy with true religion, agreeing in 1815 the results and differing only as the analytic and synthetic process, as discursive from intuitive, the former chiefly useful as perfecting the latter; in short, the necessity of a general revolution in the modes of developing and disciplining the human mind by the substitution of life and intelligence (considered in its different powers from the plant up to that state in which the difference of degree becomes a new kind (man, self-consciousness), but yet not by essential opposition) for the philosophy of mechanism, which, in everything that is most worthy of the human intellect, strikes *Death*, and cheats itself by mistaking clear images for distinct conceptions, and which idly demands conceptions where intuitions alone are possible or adequate to the majesty of the Truth. In short, facts elevated into theory—theory into laws—and laws into living and intelligent powers—true idealism necessarily perfecting itself in realism, and realism refining itself into idealism.

Such or something like this was the plan I had supposed that you were engaged on. Your own words will therefore explain my feelings, viz., that your object “was not to convey recondite, or refined truths, but to place commonplace truths in an interesting point of view.” Now this I suppose to have been in your two volumes of poems, as far as was desirable or possible, without an insight into the whole truth. How can common truths be made permanently interesting but by being *bottomed* on our common nature? It is only by the profoundest insight into numbers and quantity that a sublimity and even religious wonder become attached to the simplest operations of arithmetic, the most evident properties of the circle or triangle. I have only to finish a preface, which I shall have done in two, or, at farthest, three days; and I will then, dismissing all

1815 comparison either with the poem on the growth of your own support, or with the imagined plan of "The Recluse," state fairly my main objections to "The Excursion" as it is. But it would have been, alike unjust both to you and to myself, if I had led you to suppose that any disappointment I may have felt arose wholly or chiefly from the passages I do not like, or from the poem considered irrelatively . . .

104. "To James Gillman

"With Coleridge's name and memory must ever be associated the names of James and Anne Gillman. It was beneath the shelter of their friendly roof that he spent the last eighteen years of his life, and it was to their wise and loving care that the comparative fruitfulness and well-being of those years were due. They thought themselves honoured by his presence, and he repaid their devotion with unbounded love and gratitude . . . Doubtless there were chords in his nature which were struck for the first time by these good people, and in their presence and by their help he was a new man. But, for all that, their patience must have been inexhaustible, their loyalty unimpeachable, their love indestructible. Such friendship is rare and beautiful, and merits a most honourable remembrance."

[E. H. Coleridge: Letters, p. 657.]

42, Norfolk Street, Strand,
Saturday noon, [April 13, 1816.]

MY DEAR SIR,

The very first half hour I was with you convinced me that I should owe my reception into your family exclusively to motives not less flattering to me than honourable to yourself. I trust we shall ever in matters of intellect be reciprocally servicable to each other. Men of sense generally come to the

same conclusion; but they are likely to contribute to each other's exchange of view, in proportion to the distance or even opposition of the points from which they set out. 1816
Travel and the strange variety of situations and employments on which chance has thrown me, in the course of my life, might have made me a mere man of *observation*, if pain and sorrow and self-miscomplacence had not forced my mind in on itself, and so formed habits of *meditation*. It is now as much my nature to evolve the fact from the law, as that of a practical man to deduce the law from the fact.

With respect to pecuniary remuneration, allow me to say, I must not at least be suffered to make any addition to your family expenses—though I cannot offer anything that would be in any way adequate to my sense of the service; for that, indeed, there could not be a compensation, as it must be returned in kind, by esteem and grateful affection.

And now of myself. My ever wakeful reason, and the keenness of my moral feelings, will secure you from all unpleasant circumstances connected with me, save only one, viz., the evasion of a specific madness. You will never *hear* anything but truth from me:—prior habits render it out of my power to tell an untruth, but unless carefully observed, I dare not promise that I should not, with regard to this detested poison, be capable of acting one. No sixty hours have yet passed without my having taken laudanum, though for the last week [in] comparatively trifling doses. I have full belief that your anxiety need not be extended beyond the first week, and for the first week I shall not, I must not, be permitted to leave your house, unless with you. Delicately or indelicately, this must be done, and both the servants and the assistant must receive absolute commands from you. The stimulus of conversation suspends the terror that haunts my mind; but when I am alone, the horrors I have suffered from laudanum, the degradation, the blighted utility, almost overwhelm me. If (as I feel for the

1816 *first time* a soothing confidence it will prove) I should leave you restored to my moral and bodily health, it is not myself only that will love and honour you; every friend I have (and thank God! in spite of this wretched vice, I have many and warm ones, who were friends of my youth and have never deserted me) will thank you with reverence. I have taken no notice of your kind apologies. If I could not be comfortable in your house, and with your family, I should deserve to be miserable. If you could make it convenient I should wish to be with you by Monday evening, as it would prevent the necessity of taking fresh lodgings in town.

With respectful compliments to Mrs. Gillman and her sister, I remain, dear sir, your much obliged

S. T. COLERIDGE.

105. To Daniel Stuart

Daniel Stuart was the proprietor and editor of the Morning Post and the Courier.

Monday, May 13, 1816.

DEAR STUART,

It is among the feeblenesses of our nature, that we are often, to a certain degree, acted on by stories, gravely asserted, of which we yet do most religiously disbelieve every syllable, nay, which perhaps we know to be false. The truth is that images and thoughts possess a power in, and of themselves, independent of that act of the judgment or understanding by which we affirm or deny the existence of a reality correspondent to them. Such is the ordinary state of the mind in dreams. It is not strictly accurate to say that we believe our dreams to be actual while we are dreaming. We neither believe it, nor disbelieve it. With the will the comparing power is sus-

pendent, and without the comparing power, any act of judgment, whether affirmation or denial, is impossible. The forms and thoughts act merely by their own inherent power, and the strong feelings at times apparently connected with them are, in point of fact, bodily sensations which are the causes or occasions of the images; not (as when we are awake) the effects of them. Add to this a voluntary lending of the will to this suspension of one of its own operations (that is, that of comparison and consequent decision concerning the reality of any sensuous impression) and you have the true theory of stage illusion, equally distant from the absurd notion of the French critics, who ground their principles on the presumption of an absolute delusion, and of Dr. Johnson who would persuade us that our judgments are as broad awake during the most masterly representation of the deepest scenes of Othello, as a philosopher would be during the exhibition of a magic lantern with Punch and Joan and Pull Devil, Pull Baker, etc., on its painted slides. Now as extremes always meet, this dogma of our dramatic critic and soporific irenist would lead, by inevitable consequences, to that very doctrine of the unities maintained by the French Belle Lettrists, which it was the object of his strangely overrated, contradictory, and most illogical preface to Shakespeare to overthrow . . . 1816

106. To Hugh J. Rose

H. J. Rose was at this time a student at Cambridge. He later became a noted theologian. The projected works listed in this letter were never completed. Perhaps of all Coleridge's unwritten works, one most regrets the 'Seven hymns with a large preface or prose commentary on each.'

Muddiford, Christ Church,
September 25, 1816.

1816 DEAR SIR

I have received *The Friend*, which waits only for your instructions, and of which I intreat your acceptance as corrected by my self. You are quite in the right. It is idle to attempt the service of God and Mammon at the same altar. Instead of popularizing, therefore, I shall do my best to improve the style, which is sometimes more intangled and parenthetic than need is: tho' a book of reasoning without parentheses must be the work either of adeptship or of a *pliable* intellect. The acquaintance with so many languages has likewise made me too often *polysyllabic*—for these are the words which are possessed in common by the English with the Latin and its south European offspring, and those into which, with the least *looking roundabout*, one can translate the *full* words of the Greek, German, etc. Still there are not so many as the work has been charged with, if it be judged by what I have tried to impose on myself as the ordeal—that is, to reject whatever can be translated into other words of the same language without loss of any meaning—i.e. without change either in the conception or the feeling appropriate to it—under which latter head I do *not* place the feeling of self-importance on the part of the Author or that of *wonderment* on the part of the Readers.

Dr. Johnson's

*Let observation with extensive view
Survey mankind from China to Peru*

i.e. Let observation with extensive observation observe mankind extensively (besides this ἀναμωσαρκος, ἀπὸ θῆς printer's devil's *Person*.—*observation*.) contrasted with Dryden's "Look round the world"—is a good instance. Compare this with Milton's "yet Virgin of Proserpina from Jove"—which you

may indeed easily translate into simple English as far as the *Thought* is concerned, or Image, but not without loss of the delicacy, the sublimation of the ethereal part of the thought with a compleat detachment from the grosser *caput mortuum*. 1816
 As to Hazlitt, I shall take no notice of him or his libels—at least with reference to myself. What could I say to readers who could believe that I believed in *Astrology* but not in the Newtonian Astronomy, and had an enthusiastic faith in the Athanasian creed and the 39 Articles, but no faith at all in the existence of the Supreme Being? The last time I had the misfortune of being in this man's company I distinctly remember that I pointed out the *causes* of the Ath. creed having been adopted by the compilers of our Liturgy, and at the same time enumerated the weighty reasons for wishing it to be removed. Among others, that it must either be interpreted laxly under the superior authority of the Nicene Creed, or it could not be cleared of a very dangerous approach to *Tritheism* in its omission of the subordination of the Son to the Father, not as Man merely, but as the Eternal Logos. But enough of this. Hazlitt possesses considerable Talent; but it is diseased by a morbid hatred of the Beautiful, and killed by the absence of Imagination, and alas! by a wicked Heart of embruted appetites. Poor wretch! he is a melancholy instance of the awful Truth—that man cannot be on a level with the Beasts—he must be above them or below them. Almost all the *Sparkles* and *originalities* of his Essays are, however, echoes from Poor Charles Lamb—and in his last libel the image of the Angel without hands or feet, was stolen from a letter of my own to Charles Lamb, which had been quoted to him.

I have no other objection to the republication of the character of the late Mr. Pitt with a *comment* (for I have never altered my political *principles*) but the dislike to give pain, and not to any one party—for from the same motive I feel reluctant to republish the 2 letters to Mr. Fox written during his residence

1816 at the court of Napoleon. Of this latter gentleman I shall certainly write a character—the Hint towards it you will see in the third article of the appendix to the Lay Sermon now printing.

Should it please the Almighty to restore me to an adequate state of health, and prolong my years enough, my aspirations are toward the concentrating my powers in 3 works. The First (for I am convinced that a true System of Philosophy—the Science of Life—is *best* taught in Poetry as well as most safely) Seven Hymns with a large preface or prose commentary to each—1. to the Sun. 2. Moon. 3. Earth. 4. Air. 5. Water. 6. Fire. 7. God. The second work, 5 Treatises on the Logos, or communicative and communicable Intellect, in God and Man. 1. Λόγος προπαιδευτής or Organum verè organum. 2. Λόγος αρχιτεκτονικός, or the principles of the Dynamic or Constructive Philosophy as opposed to the Mechanic. 3. Commentary in detail on the Gospel of St. John or Λόγος Θεανσωπος. 4. Λόγος αγωνιστής Biography and Critique on the System of Giordano Bruno, Behmen, and Spinoza. 5. Λόγος ἀλογος or the Sources and Consequences of Modern *Unicism* absurdly called Unitarianism.

The third, an epic poem on the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus.

I hope that the volumes of my literary work Sibylline Leaves will be out by the end of October.

I am very weak; but the sea air agrees with me, and I exclaimed again at the first sight of it——

*God be with thee—gladsome ocean!
How gladly greet I thee once more!
Ships and waves and endless motion,
And men rejoicing on thy shore!*

I mean to stay 5 weeks longer at least—but O dear Sir! it is a hard hard thing to be compelled to turn away from such

subjects to scribble essays for newspapers—too good to answer one purpose, and not good enough for another—But so it is! and God's will be done! Should you leave Cambridge at Christmas I shall be very glad to see you if you will take the trouble of writing to Highgate at J. Gillman's Esqre. Surgeon, Highgate. 1816

I remain meantime with unfeigned anticipations of regard
Your obliged

S. T. COLERIDGE.

107. To John Murray

Highgate, February 27, 1817.

. . . I have never knowingly or intentionally been guilty of a dishonourable transaction, but have in all things that respect my neighbour been more sinned against than sinning. Much less would I hazard the appearance of an equivocal conduct at present when I feel that I am sinking into the grave, with fainter and fainter hopes of achieving that which, God knows my inmost heart! is the sole motive for the wish to live—namely, that of preparing for the press the results of twenty-five years hard study and almost constant meditation. Reputation has no charm for me, except as a preventive of starving. Abuse and ridicule are all which I could expect for myself, if the six volumes were published which would comprise the sum total of my convictions; but, most thoroughly satisfied both of their truth and of the vital importance of these truths, convinced that of all systems that have ever been prescribed, this has the least of mysticism, the very object throughout, from the first page to the last being to reconcile the dictates of common sense with the conclusions of scientific reasoning—it would assuredly be like a sudden gleam of sunshine falling

on the face of a dying man, if I left the world with a knowledge
that the work would have a chance of being read in better
1817 times . . .

108. To T. J. Street

[Postmark, March 22, 1817.]

. . . What injudicious advisers must not Southey have had! It vexes me to the quick. Never yet did any human being gain anything by self-desertion. I shall never forget the *disgust*, with which Mackintosh's "bear witness, I *recant*, *abjure*, and *abhor* the principles"—i.e. of his *Vindiciae Gallicae*—struck his auditors in Lincoln's Inn. Southey should have rested his defence on the time the Work [Wat Tyler] was written, both respecting himself and the events that happened afterwards. With the exception of one outrageously absurd and frantic passage (p. 67) the thing contains nothing that I can find that would not have been praised and thought very right, *forty years ago*, at all the public schools in England, had it been written by a lad in the first form as a *poem*. For who in the Devil's name, ever thought of reading poetry for any political or practical purposes till these Devil's times that we live in? The *publication* of the Work is the wicked thing. Briefly, my dear Sir, every one is in the right to make the best he can honorably of a bad business. But the truth is the truth. The root of the evil is a *public*, and take my word for it, this will wax more and more prolific of inconveniences, that at length it will scarcely be possible for the State to suffer any truth to be published, because it will be certain to convey dangerous falsehood to ninety-nine out of a hundred. Then we shall come round to the *esoteric* (interior, hidden) doctrine of the ancients, and learn to understand what Christ meant when He com-

manded us not to cast pearls before swine. Take four-fifths of the Wat Tyler for instance—'tis a wretched mess of pig's meat I grant—but yet take it—and reduce it to single assertions. How many of them, think you, would bear denying as *truths*? But if truth yelps and bites at the heels of a horse that cannot stop, Why—truth may think herself well off if she only gets her teeth knocked down her throat. It is for this reason, that I entertain toward Mr . . . Cobbetts, Hursts, [?] and all these creatures—and to the Foxites, who have fostered the vipers—a feeling more like hatred than I ever bore to other Flesh and Blood. So clearly do I see and always have seen, that it must end in the Suspension of Freedom of all kind. Hateful under all names these wretches are most hateful to me as Liberticides. The Work attributed to Buonaparte says "liberty for a few, equality for all." Alas! dear Sir, what is mankind but *the few* in all ages? Take *them* away, and how long would the rest, think you, differ from the Negroes or New Zealanders? Strip Washburn [?] for instance of everything that he does and talks, as a Barrel Organ, without really *understanding* one word of what he says, one ultimate end of what he does—leave him for instance, on a South sea Island, with no other words to talk in but what the savages can supply him with—and I think, in what one respect would Washburn differ from one of these Savages in his inward Soul and in any reality of Being—but for the worse? Oh! that conscience permitted me to dare tell the whole truth! I would, methinks, venture to brave the fury of the great and little Vulgar as the Advocate of an insufferable Aristocracy. But either by an Aristocracy, or a fool-and-knave-ocracy man must be governed

109. To Ludwig Tieck

1817 *This comment on Goethe's Theory of Colour must strike us, like so many of Coleridge's observations on the psychology of sensation, as astonishingly modern. Jung, who claims that the concept of "psychic reality" is the greatest contribution of analytical psychology to human knowledge, and whose observation that we live in a world of mental images seems even now revolutionary, is following a train of thought that was already in existence in the minds of Goethe, Blake, and Coleridge, all in their different ways brilliant psychologists.*

J. Gillman's Esq., Highgate,
Friday, [July 4, 1817.]

. . . I am anxious to leave the specific objections of the Mathematicians to Goethe's *Farbenlehre* as far as it is an attack on the *assumptions* of Newton. To me, I confess, Newton's assumptions, first, of a Ray of Light, as a physical synodical *Individuum*, secondly that 7 specific individua are co-existent (by what copula?) 'in this complex yet divisible Ray; thirdly, that the Prism is a mere mechanic Dissector of this Ray; and lastly, that Light, as the common result is = confusion; have always, and years before I ever heard of Goethe, appeared monstrous *Fictions!* and in this conviction I became perfectly indifferent, as to the forms of their geometrical Picturability. The assumption of the *Thing*, Light, where I can find nothing but *visibility* under given conditions, was always a stumbling-block to me. Before my visit to Germany in September, 1798, I had adopted (probably from Behmen's *Aurora* which I had *conjured over* at school) the idea, that Sound was = Light under the praepotence of Gravitation; and Color = Gravitation under the praepotence of Light: and I have never seen reason to change my faith in this respect .

110. To H. F. Cary

The Rev. H. F. Cary, the well-known translator of the Divina Commedia. Coleridge's praise of Cary's translation, in his lecture on Dante on 27th Feb., 1818, is said to have led to the immediate sale of 1,000 copies, and the Edinburgh Quarterly reviews re-echoed Coleridge's praises. 1817

Little Hampton, October [29], 1817.

I regret, dear sir, that a slave to the worst of tyrants (outward tyrants, at least), the booksellers, I have not been able to read more than two books and passages here and there of the other, of your translation of Dante. You will not suspect me of the worthlessness of exceeding my real opinion, but like a good Christian will make even modesty give way to charity, though I say, that in the severity and *learned simplicity* of the diction, and in the peculiar character of the Blank Verse, it has transcended what I should have thought possible without the Terza Rima. In itself, the metre is, compared with any English poem of one quarter the length, the most varied and harmonious to my ear of any since Milton, and yet the effect is so Dantesque that to those who should compare it only with other English poems, it would, I doubt not, have the same effect as the Terza Rima has compared with other Italian metres. I would that my literary influence were enough to secure the knowledge of the work for the true lovers of poetry in general. But how came it that you had it published in so *too* unostentatious a form? For a second or third edition, the form has its conveniences; but for the first, in the present state of English society, *quod non arrogas tibi, non habes*. If you have any other works, poems, or poemata, by you, printed or MSS. you would gratify me by sending them to me. In the mean time, accept in the spirit in which it is offered, this trifling testimonial of my respect from, dear sir,

Yours truly

S. T. COLERIDGE.

III. To J. B. Williams

1817 J. B. Williams, a young lawyer living at Highgate, was one of the circle of admiring disciples of Coleridge's later years.

Highgate,
December 12, 1817.

My dear young friend! Where it is impossible to *argue*, never condescend to *dispute*. Therefore never continue any discussion with a man, who rails against *Metaphysics* without being able to explain, what he means by the term.

That, the contrary of which involves a self-contradiction of absurdity, is itself *certain*. It is *certain*, that a perfect Arch composed of perfectly homogeneous Solids, is the stronger rather than the weaker by *any* weight, but that such or such or that *any* material arch is perfect or perfectly homogeneous, is so far from being *certain*, that the contrary may be rendered all but certain—and even approximations to this perfection must ever remain points of *confidence* only—that is, of sufficing practical probability. It follows, therefore, not as an opinion but as an ascertained *Fact*, that there is an evidence transcending (or beyond) the evidence that can be derived from *Phaenomena* (*—appearing* things from the Greek verb, φαίνωμαι, the participle of which is φαίνόμενον). Now the sum total of the objects of the Senses, divert or reflex, i.e. outward senses on the inner senses, as Fancy, Memory etc.—the Greeks comprized in the word φυσικά, physics or things of outward Nature or φύσις. The Sciences which proposed for them objects the attainment of an evidence beyond or transcending that derivable from the “φυσικά” they described as well as named by the compound adjective μετά φυσικά—namely, μετά *beyond*, φυσικά, *objects of Sense*. (Or the Senses. For in philosophical Language *Sense* means the *Faculty*, of which the different *Senses* are the *organs*).—

The *Metaphysics* therefore is a genus generalissimum,

comprizing *all* evidence transcending that of Sense—or rather the Sciences that have this for their object. These therefore are of necessity divided first into the *pure* Sciences of *Quantity* (which comprehend Geometry, Algebra, and have Mechanics) and those of *Quality*. Alas the former alone is at present in existence, as *full-grown* and of universal admission; and by using this, as their groundwork, as their permanent *preliminary* Truth, Astronomy, Navigation, etc., etc. have attained to their present *stupendous* Height. Now it is asserted, that to this height, to this degree of certainty, the investigations into the *Qualities* of objects can never attain, till there shall exist a Metaphysics of *Quality*—in short, till it shall be well understood, that the books hitherto entitled *metaphysical* might, for the most part, be better called cacophysical, or anti-physical—That Mathematics are not a *sister* Science of Metaphysics, but *one* of the two main Branches of the Latter—and lastly, that the *Sense-transcending* Definitions, Postulates, Axioms, Propositions and Demonstrations of the Metaphysics of *Quality* are not only equally necessary as the Metaphysics of *Quantity* confessedly are; but must in many instances be pre-assumed or borrowed, by the latter, as soon as ever they are *applied* to the material World. Thus Action and Reaction; Cause and Effect; that all opposites tend to unity; that unity can manifest or reveal itself only by opposite Poles; that contraries cannot act on each other immediately or without an intermedium; etc., etc. are (*all*) Truths that belong to the Metaphysics of *Quality*. Thus the Metaphysician of *Quantity* *assumes* Gravitation in every *Mechanical* problem, as in the demonstration of the Lever, Pulley, etc.; but Gravitation itself can only be *proved* as a Law, by the Metaphysician of *Quality*.

Metaphysics	{	Pure Mathematics or Metaph. of <i>Quantity</i> in Figure, Number, and Motion Pure Dynamics, or Metaph. of <i>Quality</i> .—
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1817

Physics	{	Somatology, or Physics of the outer Sense
	{	Psychology, or Physics of the inner Sense

This, my' dear Sir! was the main point of the Lecture, at which I regret that you were not able to attend

Yours very sincere Friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

112. To J. H. Green

Coleridge's friendship with Joseph Henry Green, eminent surgeon and anatomist, began in 1817. For many years following, Green regularly passed two afternoons a week at Highgate, acting as Coleridge's amanuensis and collaborator. Coleridge appointed him as his literary executor, and bequeathed to him a mass of unpublished manuscripts.

¹[December 13, 1817.]

. . . My own opinion of the German philosophers does not greatly differ from yours; much in several of them is unintelligible to me, and more unsatisfactory. But I make a division. I reject Kant's *stoic* principle, as false, unnatural, and even immoral, where in his "Kritik der praktischen Vernunft," he treats the affections as indifferent (*ἀδιάφορα*) in ethics, and would persuade us that a man who disliking, and without any feeling of love for virtue, yet acted virtuously, because and only because his *duty*, is more worthy of our esteem, than the man whose *affections* were aidant to and congruous with his conscience. For it would imply little less than that things not the objects of the moral will or under its control were yet indispensable to its due practical direction. In other words, it would subvert his own system. Likewise, his remarks on prayer

in his "Religion innerhalb der reinen Vernunft," are crass, nay vulgar and as superficial even in psychology as they are low in taste. But with these exceptions, I reverence Immanuel Kant with my whole heart and soul, and believe him to be the only philosopher, for *all men* who have the power of thinking. I cannot conceive the liberal pursuit or profession, in which the service derived from a patient study of his works would not be incalculably great, both as cathartic, tonic, and directly nutritious. 1817

Fichte in his moral system is but a caricature of Kant's, or rather, he is a Zeno, with the cowl, rope, and sackcloth of a Carthusian monk. His metaphysics have gone by; but he hath merit of having prepared the ground for, and laid the first stone of, the *dynamic* philosophy by the substitution of Act for Thing, *Der einführen Actionen statt der Dinge an sich*. Of the *Natur-philosophen*, as far as physical dynamics are concerned and as opposed to the mechanic corpuscular system, I think very highly of *some* parts of their system, as being *sound* and *scientific*—metaphysics, of Quality, not less evident to my reason than the metaphysics of Quantity, that is, Geometry, etc.; of the rest and larger part, as tentative, experimental, and highly useful to a chemist, zoologist, and physiologist, as unfettering the mind, exciting its inventive powers. But I must be understood as confining these observations to the works of Schelling and H. Steffens. Of Schelling's Theology and Theanthroposophy, the telescopic stars and nebulae are too many for my "*grasp of eye*." (N.B. The *catagresis* is *Dryden's*, not mine.) In short, I am half inclined to believe that both he and his friend Francis Baader are but half in earnest, and paint the veil to hide not the *face* but the want of one. Schelling is too ambitious, too eager to be the Grand Seigneur of the *alleinseligen Philosophie* to be altogether a trustworthy philosopher. But he is a man of great genius; and, however unsatisfied with his conclusions, one cannot read him without being either

1817 *whetted* or improved. Of the others, saving Jacobi, who is a rhapsodist, excellent in sentences all in *small capitals*, I know either nothing, or too little to form a judgement. As my opinions were formed before I was acquainted with the schools of Fichte and Schelling, so do they remain independent of them, though I con- and pro-fess great obligations to them in the development of my thoughts, and yet seem to feel that I should have been more *useful* had I been left to evolve them myself without knowledge of their coincidence. I do not *very much* like the Sternhald of our friend; it is too like an imitation of Heinse's "Ardinghello," and if the scene in the Painter's Garden at Rome is less licentious than the correspondent abomination in the former work, it is likewise duller.

I have but merely looked into Jean Paul's "Vorschule der Aisthetik," but I found one sentence almost word for word the same as one written by myself in a fragment of an Essay on the Supernatural many years ago, viz. that the *presence* of a ghost is the terror, not what he *does*, a principle which Southey, too, overlooks in his "Thalaba" and "Kehama."

But I must conclude. Believe me, dear sir, with unfeigned regard and esteem, your obliged

S. T. COLERIDGE.

113. To The Rev. H. F. Cary

Highgate,
February 6, 1818.

P.S. I have this morning been reading a strange publication—viz. Poems with very wild and interesting pictures, as swathing, etched (I suppose) but it is said printed and painted by the author, W. Blake. He is a man of Genius—and I apprehend a Swedenborgian—certainly a mystic *emphatically*. You perhaps

smile at *my* calling another poet a *Mystic*; but verily I am in the very mire of common-place common-place compared with Mr. Blake, apo- or rather—ana-calyptic Poet, and Painter!

1818

114. To Charles Augustus Tulk

Charles Augustus Tulk was an eminent Swedenborgian, and mainly instrumental in establishing the 'New Church' in Great Britain, among whose earliest members were Blake and his wife. Blake did not remain a member of the Swedenborgian community, but Tulk's interest in Blake evidently continued long after Blake's interest in Swedenborg had waned. Coleridge's writings became known to the Swedenborgians, and letters from Coleridge to Tulk were read at their gatherings.

Highgate, Thursday evening, 1818.

BLAKE'S POEMS.—I begin with my dyspathies that I may forget them, and have uninterrupted space for loves and sympathies. Title-page and the following emblem contain all the faults of the drawings with as few beauties as could be in the compositions of a man who was capable of such faults and such beauties. The faulty despotism in symbols amounting in the title-page to the *μωητισ*, and occasionally, irregular unmodified lines of the inanimate, sometimes as the effect of rigidity and sometimes of exossation like a wet tendon. So likewise the ambiguity of the drapery. Is it a garment or the body incised and scored out? The lumpness (the effect of vinegar on an egg) in the upper one of the two prostrate figures in the title-page, and the straight line down the waistcoat of pinky goldbeaters' skin in the next drawing, with the I don't-know-whatness of the countenance, as if the mouth had been formed by the habit of placing the tongue not contemptuously, but stupidly, between the lower gums and the lower jaw—these are the

only *repulsive* faults I have noticed. The figure, however, of the second leaf, abstracted from the *expression* of the countenance given it by something about the mouth, and the interspace from the lower lip to the chin, is such as only a master learned in his art could produce.

N.B. I signifies "It gave me great pleasure." ‡, "Still greater." ††, "And greater still." H, "In the highest degree." O, "In the lowest."

Shepherd, I; Spring, I (last stanza, ‡); Holy Thursday, ††; Laughing Song, ‡; Nurse's Song, I; The Divine Image, H; The Lamb, ‡; The little black Boy, H, yea H + H; Infant Joy, †† (N.B. For the three last lines I should write, "When wilt thou smile," or "O smile, O smile! I'll sing the while." For a babe two days old does not, cannot smile, and innocence and the very truth of Nature must go together. Infancy is too holy a thing to be ornamented). "The Echoing Green," I, (the figures ‡, and of the second leaf, ††); "The Cradle Song," I; "The School Boy," ††; Night, H; "On another's Sorrow," I; "A Dream," ?; "The little boy lost," I (the drawing, ‡); "The little boy found," I; "The Blossom," O; "The Chimney Sweeper," O; "The Voice of the Ancient Bard," O.

Introduction, ‡; Earth's Answer, ‡; Infant Sorrow, I; "The Clod and the Pebble," I; "The Garden of Love," ‡; "The Fly," I; "The Tyger," ‡; "A little boy lost," ‡; "Holy Thursday," I; [p. 13, O; "Nurse's Song," O?]; "The little girl lost and found" (the ornaments most exquisite! the poem, I); "Chimney Sweeper in the Snow," O; "To Tirzah, and the Poison Tree," I—and yet O; "A little Girl lost," O. (I would have had it omitted, not for the want of innocence in the poem, but from the too probable want of it in many readers.) "London," I; "The Sick Rose," I; "The little Vagabond," O. Though I cannot approve altogether of this last poem, and have been inclined to think that the error which is most likely to beset the scholars of Emanuel Swedenborg is that of utterly

demerging the tremendous incompatibilities with an evil will that arise out of the essential Holiness of the abysmal A-seity in the love of the Eternal *Person*, and thus giving temptation to weak minds to sink this love itself into *Good Nature*, yet still I disapprove the mood of mind in this wild poem so much less than I do the servile blind-worm, ~~wrap-rascal~~ scurf-coat of *fear* of the *modern* Saint (whose whole being is a lie, to themselves as well as to their brethren), that I should laugh with good conscience in watching a Saint of the new stamp, one of the first stars of our cleemosynary advertisements, groaning in wind-pipe! and with the whites of his eyes up-raised at the *audacity* of this poem! Anything rather than this degradation *I* of Humanity, and therein of the Incarnate Divinity!

1818

S.T.C.

O means that I am perplexed and have no opinion.
I, with which how can we utter "Our Father"?

115. To Charles Augustus Tulk

"Coleridge's activities for the factory children culminated in two pamphlets: *Remarks on the Objections which have been urged Against the Principle of Sir Robert Peel's Bill and The Grounds of Sir Robert Peel's Bill Vindicated*, both of which were printed in 1818 and probably circulated among the Members of Parliament. The Bill for shortening the hours of labour in cotton factories was passed on April 30, 1818. See Coleridge at Highgate, *Lucy E. Watson*, 1925, 77 and 171-187." [Unpublished Letters, Vol. II.]

Saturday Morning, February 21, 1818.

MY DEAR SIR

I have just read the *Courier* of yesterday evening, and with much grief find in it a confirmation of my fear that this affair

of the poor children in the Cotton Factories had been brought forward injudiciously on the part of Sir R. Peel without due preparation of the public mind and without due parliamentary arrangements. God forbid that I should even suspect the possibility of his not being in earnest; but really I cannot with my experience of the world wonder that others suggest the probability. For what sense is there in saying, "We—the friends of outraged Nature, will *reserve* our agreements till the second reading or the third?" On such a point this ought to have been governed by the movements of the opponents. Need I tell you what an effect the point of view, one of the two points on which I ventured to assure Mr. Shermantle, the opposition would be most successful, must have had on the H. of Commons from Mr. Freeling who is much looked up to as an independent and thinking man—and either no answer or the most languid one? I am now going to town to try whether I can get an article inserted in the *New Times* or *Courier*—for I have not received any answer to my letters, which, indeed, were as I said, meant only to *break the ice*—and it is altogether a different matter from that of an ordinary essay—as for instance I must see one or both of the principals of the *Courier*, Mr. Stuart or Mr. Street, who have lately retired—the latter very lately from the active part of the concern, and the editor & Mr. Mudford, whom I have never seen, would not dare to take any *part* in a public question—but under their prescription (and I do not know how far Dr. Stoddart himself has the full *ad arbitrium* in the *New Times*). I will do my best, hampered as I am by my lectures. But only suppose that two months ago the scheme of preparatory and auxiliary action had been formed! We should have known the vacant days of the London Papers—and long before this it might have been put out of the power of Phillips, Curwen, Finlay, etc. to have uttered a sentence, not monstrous and absurd, which would not have been a notorious *quotation* that would have injured

their own argument, unless it had been followed by an answer to the *confutation*, that had been linked on to it in the original. At present the first thing is to try whether in Monday's *Courier* or *New Times* we can procure the insertion of an essay, faint comparatively as its effect will be, to what it might have been, just as anticipation and as familiarism to—in short (what is necessary on all such occasions) *ding, donged* on the public ear in paper, magazine and threepenny pamphlets. If this cannot be done 2. whether it would be respectable and consistent with parliamentary custom to present to every member on entering the House a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a sheet, or a single printed paper. The impudent assertion of Phillips and his comrades might be dispatched in three sentences. Far more formidable are the arguments which will be used—have been used—by those who would slink out of the business without loss of their character for humanity. I introduced by remarks on the mischief of legislative intemperance, and the authority of Mr. Wyndham, the union of the claims of intellect and of humanity, which Mr. Wilberforce (in my opinion most imprudently) confirmed, and that the desired reform will gradually be effected by the Master manufacturers themselves in this *enlightened age*—(2), and still more plausible, that there is false logic in the argument on which the petition and documents are grounded—namely, all the miseries and diseases of soul and body which are the inevitable consequences of a manufactory, in which children from 6 to 14 work, on their legs, in a foul and heated atmosphere, from 13 to 14 or even 15 hours daily, are here attributed to the last three hours, and the first three years of their age. These it may be *said* but (which is far worse) will be felt by the many who are disposed to seek in despondency an excuse for indolence and selfish neutrality—these are aggravations or would be such in any common case—but in this case they are merely the last 4 or 5 drops of the essential oil of almonds when it is known that 8 is a mortal dose.

There is (it will be felt) no beneficial medicine between a complete system (such for instance as that of Olveus, when he was in his senses) and nothing—perhaps none between nothing and the abandonment of a source of commercial wealth irreconcilable at the very best with Christianity.

Thus the essay should consist of a temperate yet feeling reply to these three points. 1. that let doctors, clerical or medical, think what they may according to their theories, the Factory Children *are* happy and healthy—2—that the evils are in the process of removal by the increased humanity and enlightened self-interest of the masters themselves, and that legislative interference not being necessary is always mischievous. 3. that it is too bad a business to be started at all—and the cleaning out of a few buckets of the filth where nine tenths must remain, is but an aggravation of the nuisance.

Such are my present convictions which do not interfere with the claims of my duty, to do my best in the spirit of Hope without Hope—as far as the *present* bill is concerned—for of this I am only not despondent—with kind respects to Mrs. T:

Yours, dear Sir, truly

S. T. COLERIDGE.

116. To W. Collins, Esq., A.R.A.

Ighite, December, 1818.

. . . Spire of the decided approbation which my plan of delivering lectures has received from several judicious and highly respectable individuals, it is still too histrionic, too much like a retail dealer in instruction and pastime, not to be depressing. If the duty of living were not far more awful to my conscience than life itself is agreeable to my feelings, I

should sink under it. But, getting nothing by my publications, which I have not the power of making estimable by the public without loss of self-estimation, what can I do? The few who have won the present age, while they have secured the praise of posterity, as Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Southey, Lord Byron, etc., have been in happier circumstances. And lecturing is the only means by which I can enable myself to go on at all with the great philosophical work to which the best and most genial hours of the last twenty years of my life have been devoted. Poetry is out of the question. The attempt would only hurry me into that sphere of acute feelings from which abstruse research, the mother of self-oblivion, presents an asylum. Yet sometimes, spite of myself, I cannot help bursting out into the affecting exclamation of our Spenser (his "wine" and "ivy garland" interpreted as competence and joyous circumstances);

1818

*"Thou kenn'st not, Percy, how the rhyme should cage!
Oh, if my temples were bedewed with wine,
And girt with garlands of wild ivy-twine,
How I could gear the Muse on stately stage!
And teach her tread aloft in buskin fine,
With queen'd Bellona in her equipage!
But ah, my courage cools ere it be warm!"*

But God's will be done. To feel the full force of the Christian religion it is, perhaps, necessary for many temples that they should first be made to feel, experimentally, the hollowness of human friendship, the presumptuous emptiness of human hopes. I find more substantial comfort now in pious George Herbert's "Temple," which I used to read to amuse myself with his quaintness, in short, only to laugh at, than in all the poetry since the poems of Milton. If you have not read Herbert, I can recommend the book to you confidently. The poem entitled "The Flower" is especially affecting; and, to me, such

1818 a phrase as "and relish versing" expresses a sincerity, a reality, which I would unwillingly exchange for the more dignified "and once more love the Muse," etc. And so, with many other of Herbert's homely phrases . . .

117. To An Unknown Correspondent

[1820.]

MY DEAR SIR,

In a copy of verses entitled "A Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouny" I described myself under the influence of strong devotional feelings gazing on the Mountain till as if it had been a Shape emanating from and sensibly representing her own essence my soul had become diffused thro' "the mighty Vision," and there.

As in her natural Form, swelled vast to Heaven.

Mr. Wordsworth, I remember, censured the passage as strained and unnatural, and condemned the Hymn in toto (which nevertheless I ventured to publish in the "Sibylline Leaves") as a specimen of the Mock Sublime. It may be so for others; but it is impossible that I should find it myself unnatural, being conscious that it was the image and utterance of Thoughts and Emotions in which there was no Mockery. Yet on the other hand I could readily believe that the mood and Habit of mind out of which the Hymn rose, that differs from Milton's and Thomson's and from the Psalms, the source of all three, in the Author's addressing himself to *individual* objects actually present to his Senses, while his great Predecessors apostrophize *classes* of things, presented by the memory and generalized by the Understanding—I can readily believe, I say, that in this there may be too much of what the learned Med'ciners call the *Idiosyncratic* for true Poetry. For from my very childhood I

have been accustomed to *abstract* and as it were unrealize whatever of more than common interest my eyes dwelt on; and then by a sort of transference and transmission of my consciousness to identify myself with the Object—and I have often thought, within the last five or six years, that if ever I should feel once again the genial warmth and stir of the poetic impulse, and referred to my own experiences, I should venture on a yet stranger and wider Allegory than of yore—that I should *allegorize* myself, as a rock with it's summit just raised above the surface of some Bay or Strait in the Arctic Sea “while yet the stern and solitary Night Brook'd no alternate Sway”—all around me fixed and firm methought as my own Substance, and near me lofty Masses, that might have seemed to “hold the moon and stars in fee,” and often in such wild play with meteoric lights, or with the Shine from above which they made rebound in sparkles or disband in off-shoots and splinters and iridescent needleshafts of keenest Glitter, that it was a pride and a place of Healing to lie, as in an Apostle's Shadow, within the Eclipse and deep substance-seeming Gloom of “these Arcad Ambassadors from Earth to Heaven, Great Hierarchs” and tho' obscured yet to think myself obscured by consubstantial Forms, based in the same Foundation as my own. I grieved not to serve them—yet, lovingly and with gladsomeness I abased myself in their presence: for they are, my Brothers, I said, and the Mastery is their's by right of elder birth and by right of the mightier strivings of the hidden Fire that uplifted them above me—

118. To J. Gooden

1820 *J. Gooden is described by Crabb Robinson in his Diary as 'an elderly Gentleman, long an admirer of Wordsworth, and a good scholar.'*

Highgate,

January 14, [1820.]

. . . With regard to Philosophy, there are half a dozen things, good and bad that in this country are so nick-named, but in the only accurate sense of the term, there neither are, have been, or ever will be but two essentially different Schools of Philosophy: the Platonic, and the Aristotelean. To the latter, but with a somewhat nearer approach to the Platonic, Emanuel Kant belonged; to the former Bacon and Leibnitz and in his riper and better years Berkeley—And to this I profess myself an adherent—*nihil novum, vel inauditum audemus*, tho' as every man has a force of his own, without being more or less than a man, so is every true Philosopher an original, without ceasing to be an Inmate of Academies or of the Lyceum. But as to caution, I will just tell you how I proceeded myself, 20 years and more ago when I first felt a curiosity about Kant, and was fully aware that to master his meaning, as a system, would be a work of great Labor and long Time. First, I asked myself, have I the Labor and the Time in my power? Secondly, if so and if it would be of adequate importance to me if true, by what means can I arrive at a rational presumption for or against? I enquired after all the more popular writings of Kant—read them with delight—I then read the Prefaces to several of his Systematic Works, as the Prolegomena etc.—here too every part, I understood, and that was nearly the whole, was replete with sound and plain tho' bold and novel truths to me—and I followed Socrates's Adage respecting Heraclitus—All I understand is excellent; and I am bound to presume that the rest is at least worth the trouble of trying whether it be not equally so. In other words, until I understand

a Writer's Ignorance, I presume myself ignorant of his understanding. Permit me to refer you to a chapter on this subject in my Literary Life. Yet I by no means recommend to you an extension of your philosophic researches beyond Kant. In him is contained all that can be *learnt*—and as to the results, you have a firm Faith in God, the responsible Will of Man, and Immortality—and Kant will demonstrate to you, that this Faith is acquiesced in,—indeed, nay, confirmed by the Reason and Understanding, but grounded in Postulates authorized and Substantiated solely by the *Moral* Being— These are likewise *mine*: and whether the *Ideas* are regulative only, as Aristotle and Kant teach, or constitutive and actual as Pythagoras and Plato, is of living Interest to the Philosopher by Profession alone. Both systems are equally true, if only the former abstain from denying *universally* what is denied individually. He for whom Ideas are constitutive, will in effect be a Platonist—and in those, for whom they are regulative only, Platonism is but a hollow affectation. Dryden *could* not have been a Platonist—Shakespear, Milton, Dante, Michael Angelo, and Rafael could not have been other than Platonists. Lord Bacon, who never read Plato's Works, Taught pure Platonism in his *great* Work, the Novum Organum, and abuses his divine Predecessor for fantastic nonsense, which he had been the first to explode.

Accept my best respects as, dear Sir, Your's most sincerely,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

119. To J. H. Green

[May 25, 1820.]

. . . a man need only have common sense and a good heart to be assured that these Apostles and Apostolic men wrote nothing but what they themselves *believed*. And yet I have no hesitation in avowing that many an argument derived from

1820 the nature of man, nay, that many a strong though only *speculative* probability, pierces deeper, pushes more home, and clings more pressingly to my mind than the whole sum of merely *external* evidence, the *fact* of Christianity itself alone excepted. Nay, I feel that the external evidence derives a great and lively accession of force, for my mind, from my previous speculative convictions or presumptions; but that I cannot find that the latter are at all strengthened or made more or less probable to me by the former. Besides, as to the external evidence I make up my mind *once for all*, and merely *as* evidence think no more about it; but those facts or reflections thereon which tend to change belief into insight, can never lose their effect, any more than the distinctive *sensations* of disease, compared with a more *perceived* correspondence of symptoms with the diagnostics of a medical book.

I was led to this remark by reflecting on the awful importance of the physiological question (so generally decided one way by the late most popular writers on insanity), Does the efficient cause of disease and disordered action, and, collectively, of pain and perishing, lie entirely in the organs, and then, reawakening the active principle in me, depart—that all pain and disease would be removed, and I should stand in the same state as I stood in previous to all sickness, etc., to the admission of any disturbing forces into my nature? Or, on the contrary, would such a repaired Organismus be no fit organ for my life, as if, for instance, a *worn* lock with an equally worn key—[the key] might no longer fit the lock. The repaired organs might from intimate in-correspondence be the causes of torture and madness. A system of materialism, in which organisation stands first, whether compared by Nature, or God and Life, etc., as its *results* (even as the sound is the result of a bell), such a system would, doubtless, remove great part of the terrors which the soul makes out of itself; but then it removes the soul too, or rather precludes it. And a

supposition of coexistence, without any *wechselwirkung*, it is not in our power to adopt in good earnest; or, if we did, it would answer no purpose. For which of the two, soul or body, am I to call "I"? Again, a soul separate from the body, and yet *entirely passive* to it, would be so like a drum playing a tattoo on the drummer, that one cannot build any *hope* on it. If then the organisation be primarily the *result*, and only by reaction a *cause*, it would be well to consider what the cases are in this life, in which the restoration of the organisation removes disease. Is the organisation ever restored, except as continually reproduced? And in the remaining number are they not cases into which the soul never entered as a *conscious* or rather a moral *conscionable* agent? The regular reproduction of scars, marks, etc., the increased susceptibility of disease in an organ, after a perfect apparent restoration to healthy structure in action. the insusceptibility in other cases, as in the variolous—these and many others are fruitful subjects, and even imperfect as the induction may be, and must be in our present degree of knowledge, we might yet deduce that a suicide, under the domination of disorderly passions and erroneous principles, plays a desperately hazardous game, and that the chance is, he may re-house himself in a worse hogshead, with the nails and spikes driven inward—or, sinking below the organising power, be employed fruitlessly in a horrid *appetite* of re-skinning himself, after he had succeeded in *fleeing* his life and leaving all its sensibilities bare to the incursive powers without even the cortex of a nerve to shield them? Would it not follow, too, from these considerations, that a redemptive power must be necessary if immortality be true, and man be a disordered being? And that no power can be redemptive which does not at the same time act in the ground of the life as one with the ground, that is, must act in my will and not merely *on* my will; and yet extrinsically, as an outward power, that is, as that which *outward* Nature is to the organisation, viz. the

1820 *causa correspondens et conditio perpetua ab extra?* Under these views, I cannot read the Sixth Chapter of St. John without great emotion. The Redeemer cannot be *merely* God, unless we adopt Pantheism, that is, deny the existence of a God; and yet God he must be, for whatever is less than God, may act *on*, but cannot act *in*, the will of another. Christ must become man, but he cannot become *us*, except as far as we become *him*, and this we cannot do but by *assimilation*; and assimilation is a *vital real* act, not a notional or merely intellective one. There are phenomena, which are phenomena relatively to our present five senses, and these Christ forbids us to understand as his meaning, and, collectively, they are entitled the Flesh that perishes. But does it follow that there are no other phenomena? or that these media of manifestation might not stand to a spiritual world and to our enduring life in the same relation as our visible mass of body stands to the world of the senses, and to the sensations correspondent to, and excited by, the stimulants of that world. Lastly, would not the sum of the latter phenomena (the spiritual) be appropriately named, the Flesh and Blood of the divine Humanity? If faith be a mere apperception, *eine blosse Wahrnehmung*, this, I grant, is senseless. For it is evident, that the assimilation in question is to be carried on by faith. But if faith be an energy, a positive act, and that too an *act* of intensest power, why should it necessarily differ *in toto genere* from any other *act*, *ex. gr.* from that of the animal life in the stomach? It will be found easier to laugh or stare at the question than to prove its irrationality . . .

120. To Charles Augustus Tulk

February 12, 1821.

MY DEAR SIR,

"They say, Coleridge! that you are a Swedenborgian!"
 "Would to God," I replied fervently, "that *they* were *anything*."

I was writing a brief essay on the prospects of a country where it has become the *mind* of the nation to appreciate the evil of public acts and measures by their next consequences or immediate occasions, while the *principle* violated, or that a principle is thereby violated, is either wholly dropped out of the consideration, or is introduced but as a garnish or ornamental commonplace in the peroration of a speech! The deep interest was present to my thoughts of that distinction between the *Reason*, as the source of principles, the true celestial influx and *porta Dei in hominem æternum*, and the *Understanding*; with the clearness of the proof, by which this distinction is evinced, viz. that vital or zoo-organic power, instinct, and understanding fall all three under the same definition *in genere*, and the very additions by which the definition is applied from the first to the second, and from the second to the third, are themselves expressive of degrees only, and in degree only deniable of the preceding. (*Lix. gr. 1.* Reflect on the *selective* power exercised by the stomach of the caterpillar on the undigested miscellany of food, and, 2, the same power exercised by the caterpillar on the outward plants, and you will see the order of the conceptions.) 1. Vital Power – the power by which *means are adapted* to proximate ends. 2. Instinct = the power which *adapts means* to proximate ends. 3. Understanding = the power which adapts means to proximate ends according to *varying circumstances*. May I not safely challenge any man to peruse Huber's "Treatise on Ants," and yet deny their claim to be included in the last definition. But try to apply the same definition, with any extension of degree, to the reason, the absurdity will flash upon the conviction. First, in reason there is and can be no *degree. Deus introit aut non introit.* Secondly, in reason there are no *means* nor *ends*, reason itself being one with the ultimate end, of which it is the manifestation. Thirdly, reason has no concern with *things* (that is, the impermanent flux of particulars), but with the permanent *Relations*;

1821 and is to be defined even in its lowest or theoretical attribute, as the power which enables man to draw *necessary* and *universal* conclusions from particular facts or forms, *ex. gr.* from any three-cornered thing, that the two sides of a triangle are and must be greater than the third. From the understanding to the reason, there is no continuous *ascent* possible; it is a metabasis *eis állo γεως* even as from the air to the light. The true essential peculiarity of the human understanding consists in its capability of being irradiated by the reason, in its recipiency; and even, this is *given* to it by the presence of a higher power than itself. What then must be the fate of a nation that substitutes Locke for logic, and Paley for morality, and one or the other for polity and theology, according to the predominance of Whig or Tory predilection. Slavery, or a commotion is at hand! But if the gentry and *clerisy* (including all the learned and educated) do this, then the nation does it, or a commotion is at hand. *Acephalum* enim, aurâ quamvis et calore vitali potiat, morientem rectius dicimus, quam quod vivit. With these thoughts was I occupied when I received your very kind and most acceptable present, and the results I must defer to the next post. With best regards to Mrs. Tulk,

Believe me, in the brief interval, your obliged and grateful

S. T. COLERIDGE.

121. To The Rev. John Dawes, *Ambleside*

The Rev. John Dawes was Hartley's former schoolmaster. After the loss of his fellowship at Oriel, Hartley, after unsuccessfully attempting to make his way in London as a writer, settled for several years as an assistant master at his old school. [1822.]

. . . These are questions, my dear Sir! into which I shall not enter at present. But I cannot help questioning the *special*

applicability of the remark or *regret* to myself or to either of my Sons—least of all to Hartley. Giving no trouble to anyone—to no one opposing himself—happy from his earliest infancy, ‘a spirit of joy dancing on an aspen leaf’—to what better can I appeal than to Mr. Wordsworth’s own beautiful lines addressed to H.C. six years old? From the hour, he left the nurses’ arms, Love followed him like his shadow. All, all, among whom he lived, all who saw him themselves, were delighted with him—in nothing requisite for his age, was he backward—and what was my fault? That I did not, unadvised and without a hint from any one of my friends or acquaintances, interrupt his quiet untroublesome enjoyment by forcing him to *sit still*, and *inventing* occasions of trying his obedience—that I did not without and against all *present* reason, and at the certainty of appearing cruel, and arbitrary not only to the child but to all with whom he lived, interrupt his little comforts, and sting him into a will of resistance to my will, in order that I might make opportunities of crushing it? Whether after all that has occurred, which surely it was no crime not to have foreseen at a time when Foreboding of a less sombre character was passionately retracted, as . . . as ‘vain and causeless melancholy’—whether I should act thus, were it all to come over again, I am more than doubtful. Can I help remembering that so far from having fractious and disobedient or *indulged* children in which I could count the times on the fingers of one hand, in which I had ever occasion to compel their obedience or punish their disobediences by a *blow* or a harsh sound! If I but lowered my voice, Hartley would say—Pray don’t speak low, Father! and did or caused to do as he was told. Can I forget, how often, when I had expressed myself sorry to see such or such a child so indulged and referred to the effects on it’s Temper, I was told—that I could not expect that all children should be like mine? At the ordinary time my Boys were sent to school, and found a Father under the name of a

1822

Master in you. You, dear Sir! can best say, whether they were backward for their age, or gave proofs of having been neglected either in moral principles or in good dispositions—whether they were beyond boys in general undisciplined and disobedient. As soon as I was informed of Hartley's passionateness and misconduct towards his Brother, you will do me the justice to answer for me, whether I was not even more agitated and interested than in your opinion the case warranted—and whether I left any means untried to bring Hartley to a sense of his error. A sad, sad interval followed for me from the ill-fated hour, I left the North with Mr. Montagu, speedily as I supposed to return, and Hartley's first vacation which he spent with me at Calne. Whatever else has been said—how far truly, and how far calumniously, I humbly leave it to my merciful God and Redeemer to determine for me—it will not surely be said that the two Lads were left friendless, or under the protection of Friends incompetent, or whom I dared believe myself permitted to apprehend unwilling, to observe their goings-on, during their holidays or holiday-tides. Since the time of Hartley's first arrival at Calne, to the present day I am not conscious of having failed in any point of duty, of admonition, persuasion, entreaty, warning, or even (tho' ever reluctantly, I grant) of—parental injunction—and of repeating the same whenever it could be done without the almost certain consequence of baffling the end in view. I noticed, and with concern, in Hartley, and afterwards in Derwent a pugnacity in self-opinion, which ever had been alien from my own character, the weakness of which consisted in the opposite fault of facility, a readiness to believe others my superiors and surrender my own judgement to others, but in part, this appeared to me the fault of their ages, and in part, tho' I could not refuse an inward affront, tho' I mourned over it in silence, to the complaint made by others—both at Calne and at Highgate, of impressions made in their minds

with regard to myself, not more unjust in themselves than unfortunate for them— As far as the *opinions* and suppositions went, they indeed speedily underwent a revolution, soon after they had been with me and had compared them with those of the respectable Persons, who had known me day and night uninterruptedly year after year—And in Hartley at least, the revolution was complete. But the habit of feeling remained. I appeal to God and their own consciences and to all good men who have observed my conduct towards them whether I have aught to condemn myself for, except perhaps a too delicate manner of applying their affections and understandings and moral senses—and by which, it is to be feared, I have in Hartley's case unwittingly fostered that cowardice as to mental pain which forms the one of the two calamitous defects in his disposition— For to whatever extent the 'indoles pervicax et reluctans' betrayed itself during his sojourn at Calne, and afterwards on his first arrival at Highgate, I have the testimony of our sensible and exemplary Minister, the Revd. S. Mence, formerly Tutor at Exeter College, and who took a lively interest in both my sons, that it was less and less apparent at each successive visit, and but a few months before his unhappy fall-out at Oriel he had, in common with my excellent Friends, Mr. and Mrs. Gillman—warmly congratulated me on the striking improvement in Hartley's manners, above all in the points of Docility and Self-Control. But let it be that I am rightly reproached for my negligence in withstanding and taming his Self-will—yet is this the main Root of the Evil? I could almost say—would to God, it were for then I should have more Hope. But alas! it is the absence of a Self, it is the want or Torpor of Will, that is the mortal Sickness of Hartley's Being, and has been, for good and for evil, his character—his moral *Idiocy*—from his earliest Childhood—Yea and hard it is for me to determine which is the worse,—*morally* considered, I mean: the selfishness from the want or defect of a manly

1822

Self-love, or the Selfishness that springs out of the excess of a wordly Self-interest. In the eye of a Christian and a Philosopher, it is difficult to say, which of the two appears the greater deformity, the relationless, unconjugated, and intransitive verb Impersonal with neither Subject nor Object, neither governed or governing, or the narrow proud Egotism, with neither Thou or They except as it's Instruments or Involutes. *Prudentially*, however, and in regard to the supposed good and evil of this Life, the balance is woefully against the former, both because the Individuals so characterized are beyond comparison the smaller number, and because they are sure to meet with their bitterest enemies in the latter. Especially, if the poor dreamy Mortals chance to be amiable in other respects and to be distinguished by more than usual Talents and Acquirements. Now this, my dear Sir, is precisely the case with poor Hartley. He has neither the resentment, the ambition, nor the Self-love of a man—and for this very reason he is too often as Selfish as a Beast—and as unwitting of his own selfishness. With this is connected his want of a salient point, a self-acting principle of volition—and from this, again, arises his shrinking from, *his shirking*, whatever requires and demands the exertion of this inward power, his cowardice as to mental pain, and the procrastination consequent on these. His occasional wilfulness results from his weakness of will aided indeed, now and then, by the sense of his intellectual superiority and by the Sophistry which his ingenuity supplies and which is in fact the brief valiancy of Self-despondence. Such is the truth and the fact as to Hartley—a truth, I have neither extenuated nor sought to palliate. But equally true it is, that he is innocent, most kindly natured, exceedingly good-tempered, in the management and instruction of Children excels any young man I ever knew; and before God I say it, he has not to my knowledge a single vicious inclination—tho' from absence of nervousness he needs to be guarded against filling

his wine-glass too often. But this temptation *at present* besets him only under the stimulus of society and eager conversation—just as was the case with his Grandfather, one of the most temperate men alive in his ordinary practice—His Cousin, the Revd. W. Hart Coleridge, assured me that nothing could be more correct, or manageable than Hartley was during the two or three weeks, that he lately passed under his eyes—that what he wanted, and what was indispensable, was kindness without too much Delicacy, Kindness without any regard to his immediate pain—Whatever else is to be done or prevented, London he must not live in—the number of young men who will seek his company *to be amused*, his own want of pride, and the opportunity of living or imagining rather that he can live from hand to mouth by writing for Magazines, etc.—these are Ruin for him—I have but one remark to make—that of all the Wails I ever knew, Hartley is the least likely and the least calculated to lead any human Being astray by his example. He may exhibit a warning—but assuredly he never will afford an inducement. 1822

I could not think of his proceeding to the North in acceptance of your kind invitation, without putting you in possession of my inmost conviction. In opening out my heart I may, I fear, have betrayed symptoms of a wounded Spirit. But the errors of a wounded Spirit are what you, my dear Sir! will be least inclined to judge with harshness.

One assurance I dare give—namely, that at present my Son earnestly looks forward to the hope of making himself agreeable and that he would be most happy should it be in his power to become in any way aidant or serviceable.

Under all events I must ever feel and profess myself,

My dear Sir

With unfeigned respect and regard,

Your obliged and grateful, •

W. T. COLERIDGE.

122. To The Rev. Richard Cattermole

1824 *Coleridge was nominated as a 'Royal Associate' of the newly Chartered Royal Society of Literature in May, 1824. The conditions of the society were 'a yearly £100 versus a yearly essay.' Coleridge read a paper on the Prometheus of Aeschylus, on 15th May, 1825. The Rev. Richard Cattermole was Secretary to the Royal Society of Literature.*

Grove, Highgate,
March 16, 1824.

REVEREND SIR

I received your announcement of the Distinction and Honor successively conferred on me by the Council of the Royal Society of Literature with those inward acknowledgements, which not to have felt would argue me altogether unworthy of the Boon. And let me [be] allowed to add that my satisfaction was rendered more perfect, and my sense of the favor enlivened, by my previous unqualified approbation of the Objects of the Society, and the reverential gratitude, I had felt toward its Royal Patron, merely as a Literary Man, and prior to any hope or anticipation of a personal interest in my Sovereign's Munificence. Finally, had there been aught wanting to complete my gratification, I should have found it supplied by the circumstance that the only conditions required were such as every honest Man must regard as a debt long before incurred, and the Prohibitions extended to no point of principle or conduct, that was not already precluded for a Scholar, an Englishman and a Christian by his own reason and Conscience.

Ignorant of the way in which a more formal notification of my grateful Acceptance of the Honor of a Royal Associateship should be conveyed, and uncertain whether it is usual and regular to have a more distinct and explicit acknowledgement layed before the Council, than the present Letter can be considered, I must press on your kindness for the requisite

information and likewise at what date from the Election of an Associate the *Essay* should be delivered. I observe too in the printed papers, which I owe to your kind attention, that every Associate is required to state the particular department of Letters, to which (relatively at least to the Society) he would be understood as being especially attached. For myself, I have chosen a double branch, but with a common stem, namely. 1824

1. The reciprocal oppositions and conjunctions of Philosophy, Religion, and Poetry (the heroic and dramatic especially, the former comprizing both the homeric and hesiodic species, and the latter including the lyric) in the Gentile World, and in early Greece more particularly. To which, as an offset, I add, the differences between the Popular, the Sacerdotal and the— if I may hazard the word—*Mysteria*, Religion of civilized Paganism.

2. The influences of the Institutions and Theology of the Latin Church on Philosophy, Language, Science and the Liberal Arts from the VIIth to the XIVth Century.

In whatever point I am informal or deficient, I presume on your goodness to set me right: and shall receive every correction, your superior judgement and information shall suggest, as an additional ground and motive for the high respect, with which I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your obliged humble Servant

S. T. COLERIDGE.

123. To James Gillman

Ramsgate, November 2, 1824

. . . Upon my seriousness, I do declare that I cannot make out certain dream-devils or damned souls that play pranks with me, whenever by the operation of a cathartic pill or from the want

1824 of one, a ci-devant dinner in its metempsychosis is struggling in the lower intestines. I cannot comprehend how any thoughts, the offspring or product of my own reflection, conscience, or fancy, could be translated into such images, and agents and actions, and am half-tempted (N.B. between sleeping and waking) to regard with some favour Swedenborg's assertion that certain foul spirits of the lowest order are attracted by the precious ex-viands, whose conversation the soul half appropriates to itself, and which they contrive to whisper into the sensorium. The Honourable Emanuel has repeatedly caught them in the fact, in that part of the spiritual world corresponding to the guts in the world of bodies, and driven them away. I do not pass this Gospel; but upon my honour it is no bad apocrypha . . .

124. To The Rev. S. Mence

The Rev. S. Mence was the Minister of the Church in Highgate presumably attended by Coleridge and the Gillmans.

Saturday, January 12th, 1825.

P.S. . . . I am aware of few subjects more calculated to awake a deep at once practical and speculative interest in a philosophic mind than the analogies between organic (I might say, organic) Life and Will. The Facts both of Physiology and Pathology lead to one and the same conclusion—viz.—that in some way or other the Will is the obscure *Radical* of the Vital Power. My dear Sir! am I under the incubiation of Self-conceit? I trust, not. Yet there are not half a dozen men in the world of my acquaintance, to whom I should dare utter the sentiment, which I now confess to *you* in that there are *Libraries* of Works from *infra-duodecimos* to *Ultra-folios* on the two

great Moments of the Christian Faith, *Original Sin* (i.e. Sin, as the *Source* of sinful actions) and Redemption; that the *ground*, and this the *Superstructures*, of Christianity. And yet (it is my persuasion that) only not everything is yet to be said! In the article of Redemption, Metaphors have been obtruded as the Reality: and in all the Mysteries subordinate to Redemption, Realities have been exinanized into Metaphors. Luther indeed was a mighty Wrestler: and the very Halt on the Thigh bears witness of the Manfulness of his Struggles. 1825

But Luther had no Eljahs to succeed him.

Believe me

with sincere respect
and regard, my dear Sir,

Your's truly,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

125. To John Flaxman

Grove, Highgate,
January 24, 1825.

DEAR SIR

I will attempt no other apology for this intrusion or of that of which *this* is meant to apprise you, than by stating my motive and the occasion. I am preparing an essay on the Connection of Statuary and Sculpture with Religion: the origin of statuary as a fine art, that is, as a form or species of Poesy (which I distinguish from poetry as a genus from one of its species). This origination or new birth is beyond controversy, the result of the Grecian mind. I then proceed to the re-action of sculpture after its escape from the caves and temples of Egyptian and Indo-Egyptian hieroglyphical idolatry into Greece on the religious conceptions and imaginations of men and in what way it joined with philosophy and the mysteries in preparing the Graeco-Roman world for Christianity, and

1825 that great article of the *Divine* HUMANITY and its meditative offices. Lastly, on the true essence of the ideal, and its intimate connection with the symbolic. Now, my dear Sir, I trust you think too well of me to suspect that I am capable of flattery. If I were sufficiently sure in my self-estimation to endure the thought of such a degradation of my own moral being, I am not so callously vulgar as to offer such an affront to your feelings. What therefore I can affirm with entire sincerity, I venture to communicate with perfect simplicity, namely, in all that respects ideal beauty, and all the intuitions, expressions, affections, and states of being, that belong or are akin to the beautiful (and the beautiful is always *elevated*, even in the face of a sleeping infant. Alas! that almost one half of the world mistake the *pretty*, and almost the remaining half the *agreeable*, for the beautiful) I consider you as the *first*, not only of our contemporaries, but of all modern sculptors. You must not wonder, therefore, if before I go on with my essay, I should wish both to kindle and embody my thoughts by the contemplation of such works as you may happen to have in your laboratory, and at the same time to obtain from you or your dear sister and daughter a list of your chief works that are accessible in or near London, and you would greatly oblige me by mentioning any two or three to which you would wish to have my attention especially directed . . .

126. To James Gillman

[8 *Plains of Waterloo, Ramsgate.*]

October 10, 1825.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is a flat'ning thought that the more we have seen, the less we have to say. In youth and early manhood the mind and nature are, as it were, two rival artists both potent magicians,

and engaged, like the King's daughter and the rebel genii in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, in sharp conflict of conjuration, each having for its object to turn the other into canvas to paint on, clay to mould, or cabinet to contain. For a while the mind seems to have the better in the contest, and makes of Nature what it likes, takes her lichens and weather-stains for types and printers' ink, and prints maps and facsimiles of Arabic and Sanscrit MSS. on her rocks; composes country dances on her moonshiny ripples, fandangos on her waves, and waltzes on her eddy-pools, transforms her summer gales into harps and harpers, lovers' sighs and sighing lovers, and her winter blasts into Pindaric Odes, Christabels, and Ancient Mariners set to music by Beethoven, and in the insolence of triumph conjures her clouds into whales and walruses with palanquins on their backs, and chases the dodging stars in a sky-hunt: But alas! alas! that Nature is a wary wily long-breathed old witch, tough-lived as a turtle and divisible as the polyp, repullulative in a thousand snips and cuttings, *integra et in toto*. She is sure to get the better of Lady Mind in the long run and to take her revenge too: transforms our to-day into a canvas dead-coloured to receive the dull, featureless portrait of yesterday: not alone turns the mimic mind, the ci-devant sculptress with all her kaleidoscopic freaks and symmetries! into clay, but *leaves* it such a *clay* to cast dumps or bullets in; and lastly (to end with that which suggested the beginning) she mocks the mind with its own metaphor, metamorphosing the memory into a *lignum vitae* escritoire to keep unpaid bills and dun's letters in, with outlines that had never been filled up, MSS. that never went further than the title-pages, and proof sheets, and foul copies, of Watchmen, Friends, Aids to Reflection, and other *stationary* wares that have kissed the publishers' shelf with all the tender intimacy of inoculation! Finis! and what is all this about? why, verily, my dear friend! the thought forced itself on me, as I was

1825 beginning to put down the first sentence of this letter, how impossible it would have been fifteen or even ten years ago for me to have travelled and voyaged by land, river, and sea a hundred and twenty miles with fire and water blending their souls for my propulsion, as if I had been riding on a centaur with a sopha for a saddle, and yet to have nothing more to tell of it than that we had a very fine day and ran aside the steps in Ramsgate Pier at half-past four exactly . . .

127. To John Taylor Coleridge

John Taylor Coleridge, son of Coleridge's brother James, was for eleven months (January–November, 1825) editor of the Quarterly Review. He was a staunch defender of his uncle.

*Grove, Highgate,
Monday Night—(bless me! Two o'clock Tuesday morning)*

December 20, 1825.

. . . I cannot persuade myself that the business of reviewing and the habit of procuring, sanctioning and becoming both morally and ostensibly responsible for anonymous criticisms on the work of contemporaries are not unfavourable to sanity of judgement and delicacy of feeling—the Pulse in those minor morals which are perhaps most friendly to the spiritual growth of the *entire* man. I have found in Seneca and even in Lord Bacon as poor a play on words and compensated by a less weighty meaning than in the maxim—that a man may retain a character of integrity and yet have lost integrity of character. To write a silly book and to be fooled by unwise friends into publishing it, may be declared a misdemeanour in the mildest court of criticism, but to be made permanently ridiculous and to have a wife, a daughter, a sister, know it, does seem to me a punishment disproportionate unconsciously to the offence.

When I met poor Dibdin just below Middle Row, and saw him bursting, swelling, throbbing with the pain of inflammation I could not refrain from sympathising with his sufferings—and when Mr. Benson said at your house, he richly deserved the lash, I said to myself, It may be so; but still I would not have had one, whom I loved and esteemed the Beadle. At all events it is an *invidious* office—and never completely off the mind and I am heartily glad that you have done with it. One motive of a selfish complexion works a little with me. I want sadly to take counsel with and of you, respecting my own literary operations. And I can now do this without any disturbing force from the thought that I might excite a painful wish in your mind of doing what could not be done without imputations. Yet if I know myself I can truly declare that all I ever wished to see in a Review, was a fair account of the work I had written—how far it had the character of originality, and how far the less doubtful merit of truth and importance. I wanted no disquisitions on myself or my genius, but a fair statement of my objects and of my agreements and to be set right when the reviewer conceived me to have gone wrong.

My kind love to Mrs. John, and love and blessings to my dear grand-nephews.

Be assured that I am with most affectionate regard and esteem your kinsman and friend

S. T. COLERIDGE.

128. To The Rev. Edward Coleridge

Henry Nelson Coleridge, 1798–1843, a younger brother of John Taylor Coleridge, married Coleridge's daughter Sara on 3rd September, 1829. Coleridge was at first displeased with the match, but afterwards gave his full confidence to his son-in-law, who after

Coleridge's death faithfully undertook the task of re-editing his uncle's published works, and of editing his literary as distinct from his philosophical unpublished manuscripts. His early book Six Months in the West Indies was written after a visit in the capacity of Secretary, to, his' cousin William Hart Coleridge, Bishop of Barbados. E. H. Coleridge writes: 'Of the charm of his appearance, and the brilliance of his conversation, I have heard those who knew him speak with enthusiasm.' He died, from an affection of the spine, in January, 1843.

The Rev. Edward Coleridge was the sixth and youngest son of James Coleridge, and was for many years a Master and afterwards Fellow of Eton. He corresponded regularly with his uncle, who was greatly attached to him. It was to Edward Coleridge that the poet addressed, in the form of letters, the Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit.

[1827.]

. . . I have just received Henry's Book; and have read almost half—I have received both amusement and instruction from it; it cannot but have an extensive circulation—One fault there is, that I would fain have had removed, an imitation of Southey, especially in his Letters from Portugal and Spain in the frequent obtrusion of offensive images, Sweating etc., and again a little too much and too often of eating. Like Southey, too, his Levities border now and then on the Odd, and Grotesque—and he has not Southey's excuse. For I can venture to say to *you*, sub rosa, that all men of cold constitutions are naturally immodest, as far as their Notions of Morality will permit. So Southey—while he keeps clean of *one* outlet, he does not care what filth comes out of the other Orifices. But I could almost be angry with Henry for that very indiscreet and ex omni parte objectionable Episode on *Maria*, not to say a word of the infantile Silliness of “but you do not know *Maria*, nor me either.” It is idle to suppose that the Author of so interesting a Book, the only one that supplies

any real reliable information on the present state and manners of the West Indies should not be generally known; and that he was the Bishop's Cousin and Secretary—nor is it possible but that the Book will be read in Madeira—and I know too many melancholy instances of the trouble, nay, ruin brought on Individuals and whole Families in Naples, Sicily, and Minorca by the unthinking *Blab* of English Tourists and Travellers. Read, my dear Edward! the last paragraph—about carrying off a Nun, as a good Joke etc. not to say, that the impertinence and coxcombry of a perfect Stranger making love and asking a Young Lady—Are you happy? would have surprised me less from my own Derwent. I may be too severe—the Snows may have drifted from my head downwards and inwards—but believe me, the source of it is in affectionate apprehension of the consequences. Mr. Gillman who has read it already twice over, when he should have been in bed, pronounces it a *right* pleasant Book and with a deal of valuable information in it—but he too complains of the Southerianisms. I shall take my very first leisure evening, possibly tomorrow, to finish it, and shall then write to Henry . . .

1827

129. To Mrs. Gillman

May 3, 1827.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received and acknowledge your this morning's present both as plant and symbol, and with appropriate thanks and correspondent feeling. The rose is the pride of summer, the delight and the beauty of our gardens; the aglantine, the honeysuckle, and the jasmine, if not so bright or so ambrosial, are less transient, creep nearer to us, clothe our walls, twine over our porch, and haply peep in at our chamber window,

with the crested wren or linnet within the tufts wishing good morning to us. Lastly the geranium passes the door, and in its hundred varieties imitating now this now that leaf, odour, blossom of the garden, still steadily retains its own *staid* character, its own sober and refreshing hue and fragrance. It deserves to be the inmate of the house, and with due attention and tenderness will live through the winter grave yet cheerful, as an old family friend, that makes up for the departure of gayer visitors, in the leafless season. But none of these are the *myrtle*! In none of these, nor in all collectively, will the *myrtle* find a substitute. All together and joining with them all the aroma, the spices, and the balsams of the hot-house, yet would they be a sad exchange for the *myrtle*! Oh, precious in its sweetness is the *rich* innocence of its snow-white blossoms! And dear are they in the remembrance; but these may pass with the season, and while the myrtle plant, our own myrtle plant remains unchanged, its blossoms are remembered the more to endear the faithful bearer; yea, they survive invisibly in every *more than* fragrant leaf. As the flashing strains of the nightingale to the yearning murmurs of the dove, so the myrtle to the rose! He who has once possessed and prized a genuine *myrtle* will rather *remember* it under the cypress tree than seek to *forget* it among the rose bushes of a paradise.

God bless you, my dearest friend, and be assured that if death do not suspend memory and consciousness, death itself will not deprive you of a faithful participator in all your hopes and fears, affections and solitudes, in your unalterable

S. T. COLERIDGE.

130. To William Sotheby

9 Waterloo Plains, Ramsgate, 1828

November 9, 1828.

MY DEAR SIR

It is a not unfrequent tragico-whimsical fancy with me to imagine myself as the survivor of

*"This breathing House not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong"—*

and an Assessor at it's dissection—infusing, as spirits may be supposed to have the power of doing, this and that thought into the mind of the Anatomist. Ex. gr. Be so good as to give a cut just *there*, right across the umbilical region—there lurks the fellow *that* for so many years tormented me on my first waking! or—a stab *there*, I beseech you, it was the seat and source of that dreaded subsultus which so often threw my Book out of my hand, or drove my pen in a blur over the paper on which I *was* writing! But above all and over all has risen and hovered the strong half-wish, half-belief, that there would be found if not the justifying reason yet the more than the palliation and excuse--if not the necessitating *cause*, yet the originating occasion, of my heaviest—and in truth they, are so bad that without vanity or self-delusion I might be allowed to call them my *only* offences against others, viz. Sins of Omission. O if in addition to the disturbing accidents and Taxes on my Time resulting from my almost constitutional pain and difficulty in uttering and in persisting to utter, NO! if in addition to the distractions of narrow and embarrassed Circumstances, and of a poor man constrained to be under obligation to generous and affectionate Friends only one degree richer than himself, the calls of the day forcing me away in my most genial hours from a work in which my very

1828 heart and soul were buried, to a five guinea task, which fifty persons might have done better, at least, more effectually for the purpose; if in addition to these, and half a score other intrusive Draw-backs, it were possible to convey without inflicting the sensations, which (suspended by the stimulus of earnest conversation or of rapid motion), annoy and at times overwhelm me as soon as I sit down alone, with my pen in my hand, and my head bending and body compressed, over my table (I cannot say, desk)—I dare believe that in the mind of a competent Judge what I have performed will excite more surprize than what I have omitted to do, or failed in doing. Enough of this—— . . .

131. To William Sotheby

[*Postmark, July 13, 1829.*]

. . . The only uneasiness, I ever suffered on Derwent's account, was from some falsely called fige-thinking opinions, which he had *caught* at Cambridge in the society of Austin, Macaulay, and some others whose talents and superior acquirements were too well fitted to render their infidelity infectious. But tho' the circumstance provoked me for the time, it did not give me any serious disquietude—for I felt sure, that it was not the true *Image* of the *Psyche*, but only one of the *Larvae* that he would soon *slough*. And the event, thank God! has verified my presentiment. Derwent has very fine talents, and a particularly fine sense of metrical music. His lyric *Fantaisie* are among the most musical schemes or movements of Verse, that I have ever met with, in our later poetry at least. But he is confessedly not equal to Hartley in original conceptions and either depth or opulence of Intellect. Poor dear Hartley! He was hardly—nay, cruelly—used by the Oriel men—and it

fell with a more crushing weight on him, that with all his defects Love had followed him like his shadow and still does. If you can conceive, in connection with an excellent heart, 1829 sound religious principles, a mind constitutionally religious, and lastly, an active and powerful Intellect—if you can conceive, I say, in connection with all these, not a *mania*, not a *derangement*, but an *ideocy* of Will or rather of Volition, you will have formed a tolerably correct conception of Hartley Coleridge. Wordsworth says—I lament it but have ceased to condemn him. All this I have written in *confidence*. What Queen Mary said, on the loss of our last stronghold in France, that if her Heart were opened, Calais would be found at the core, I may say of my poor dear Hartley. I can never read Wordsworth's delightful lines to "H.C. at six years old"—without a feeling of awe, blended with tenderer emotions—so prophetic were they.

132. To Miss Lawrence

March 22, 1832.

MY DEAR MISS LAWRENCE,

You and *dear, dear* Mrs. Crompton are among the few sunshiny images that endear my past life to me, and I never think of you without heartfelt esteem, without affection, and a *yearning* of my better being toward you. I have for more than eighteen months been on the brink of the grave, the object of my wishes, and only not of my prayers, because I commit myself, poor dark creature, to an Omniscient and All-merciful, in whom are the issues of life and death,—content, yea, most thankful, if only His Grace will preserve within me the blessed faith that He *is*, and is a God that heareth prayers, abundant in forgiveness, and *therefore* to be feared, *not false*, no God as

imagined by the Unitarians, a sort of, I know not what *law-giving* Law of Gravitation, to whom prayer would be as idle as to the law of gravity, if an undermined wall were falling upon me; but “a God that made the eye, and therefore shall *He* not see? who made the ear, and shall He not hear?” who made the heart of man to love Him, and shall He not love the creature whose ultimate end is to love Him?—a God who *seeketh* that which was lost, who calleth back that which had gone astray; who calleth through His own Name; Word, Son, from everlasting the Way and the *Truth*; and who became man that for poor, fallen mankind he might *be* (not merely announced but *be*) the *Resurrection* and the *Life*,—“Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest!” Oh, my dear Miss Lawrence! prize above all earthly things the faith. I trust that no sophistry of shallow infra-socinians has quenched it within you,—that God is a God that heareth prayers. If varied learning, if the assiduous cultivation of the reasoning powers, if an accurate and minute acquaintance with all the arguments of controversial writers; if an intimacy with the doctrines of the Unitarians, which can only be obtained by one who for a year or two in his early life had been a convert to them, yea, a zealous and by themselves deemed powerful supporter of their opinions; lastly, if the utter absence of any imaginable worldly interest that could sway or warp the mind and affections,—if all these combined can give any weight or authority to the opinion of a fellow-creature, they will give weight to my adjuration, sent from my sickbed to you in kind love. O trust, O trust, in your Redeemer! in the coeternal *Word*, the Only-begotten, the living *Name* of the Eternal I AM, Jehovah, Jesus! . . .

133. To Joseph Henry Green

[Postmark, Highgate, March 29, 1832.] 1832

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND

On Monday I had a sad trial of intestinal fever and restlessness; but thro' God's mercy, without any craving for the poison which for more than 30 years has been the great debasement, and misery of my existence. I pray that God may have mercy on me—tho' thro' uamanly impatiency of wretched sensations that produced a disruption of my mental continuity of productive action I have for the better part of my life yearned towards God, yet having recourse to the evil *Being* [. . . ? . . .] a continued act of thirty years self-poisoning thro' cowardice of pain, and without other motives—say rather without motive—but solely thro' the goad *a tergo* of unmanly and unchristian fear, God knows! I in my inmost soul acknowledge all my sufferings as the necessary effect of his Wisdom, and all the alleviations as the unmerited graces of his Goodness. Since Monday I have been tranquil; but still, placing the palm of my hand with its lower edge on the navel, I feel with no intermission a death-grasp, sometimes relaxed, sometimes tightened, but always present; and I am convinced, that if Medical Ethics permitted the production of an Euthanasia, and a Physician convinced that at my time of Life there was no rational hope of revalescence to any useful purpose, should administer a score drops of the purest Hydrocyanic acid, and I were immediately after opened (as is my earnest wish) the state of the mesenteric region would solve the problem . . .

Note.—After Coleridge's death, an autopsy was performed, and Gillman wrote the following report to Cottle: 'The left side of the chest was nearly occupied by the heart, which was immensely enlarged, and the sides of which were so thin as not to be able to sustain its weight when raised. The right

1832 side of the chest was filled with fluid enclosed in a membrane having the appearance of a cyst, amounting in quantity to upwards of three quarts, so that the lungs on both sides were completely compressed. This will sufficiently account for his bodily sufferings, which were almost without intermission during the progress of the disease, and will explain to you the necessity of subduing these sufferings by narcotics, and of driving on a most feeble circulation by stimulants which his case had imperatively demanded. This disease, which is generally of slow progress, had its commencement in Coleridge nearly forty years before his death.' Cf. *Coleridge at Highgate*, Lucy E. Watson, 1925, 29.

134. To John Peirse Kennard

John Peirse Kennard was the friend of Adam Steinmetz, a friend and ardent disciple of Coleridge in his later years. This letter was written on the occasion of the death of Adam Steinmetz.

Grove, Highgate, August 13, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter has announced to me a loss too great, too awful, for common grief, or any of its ordinary forms and outlets. For more than an hour after, I remained in a state which I can only describe as a state of deepest mental silence, neither prayer nor thanksgiving, but a prostration of absolute faith, as if the Omnipresent were present to me by a more special intuition, passing all sense and all understanding. Whether Death be but the cloudy Bridge to the Life beyond, and Adam Steinmetz has been wafted over it without suspension, or with an immediate resumption of self-conscious existence, or

whether his Life be hidden in God, in the eternal only-begotten, the Pleroma of all Beings and the *Habitation* both of the Retained and the Retrieved, therein in a blessed and most divine Slumber to grow and evolve into the perfected Spirit,—for sleep is the appointed season of all growth here below, and God's ordinances in the earthly may shadow out his ways in the Heavenly,—in either case our friend is *in God* and *with God*. Were it possible for me even to *think* otherwise, the very grass in the fields would turn black before my eyes, and nature appear as a skeleton fantastically mossed over beneath the weeping vault of a charnel house!

Deeply am I persuaded that for every man born on earth there is an appointed task, some remedial process in the soul known only to the Omniscient; and, this through divine grace fulfilled, the sole question is whether it be needful or expedient for the church that he should still remain: for the individual himself “to depart and to be with Christ” must needs be GREAT gain . . .

135. To Mrs. Aders

Mrs. Aders was the beautiful and accomplished daughter of the engraver Raphael Smith. She herself was an amateur artist, and her paintings were praised by Blake, who was among the many visitors to her house. The letter refers to the new edition of his poetical works which Coleridge had begun to see through the press. Apparently he had intended that the epitaph should be inscribed on the outline of a headstone, and that this should illustrate the last page of the volume.

[1833.]

MY DEAR MRS. ADERS,

By my illness or oversight I have occasioned a very sweet vignette to have been made in vain—except for its own beauty.

Had I sent you the lines that were to be written on the upright tomb, you and our excellent Miss Denman would have, first, seen the dimension requisite for letters of a distinctly visible and legible size; and secondly, that the homely, plain *Church-yard Christian* verses would not be in keeping with a Muse (though a lovelier I never wooed), nor with a lyre or harp or laurel, or aught else *Parnassian* and allegorical. A rude old yew-tree, or a mountain ash, with a grave or two, or any other characteristic of a village rude church-yard,—such a hint of a landscape was all I meant; but if any figure, rather that of an elderly man

Thoughtful, with quiet tears upon his cheek.

(Tombless Epitaph. See “Sibylline Leaves.”

But I send the lines, and you and Miss Denman will form your own opinion.

Is one of Wyville’s proofs of my face worth Mr. Aders’ acceptance? I wrote under the one I sent to Henry Coleridge the line from Ovid, with the translation, thus:

S. T. COLERIDGE, 1 TAT. SU.F. 63

*Not/handsome/was but/was/cloquent
“Non formosus erat, sed erat facundus Ulysses.”*

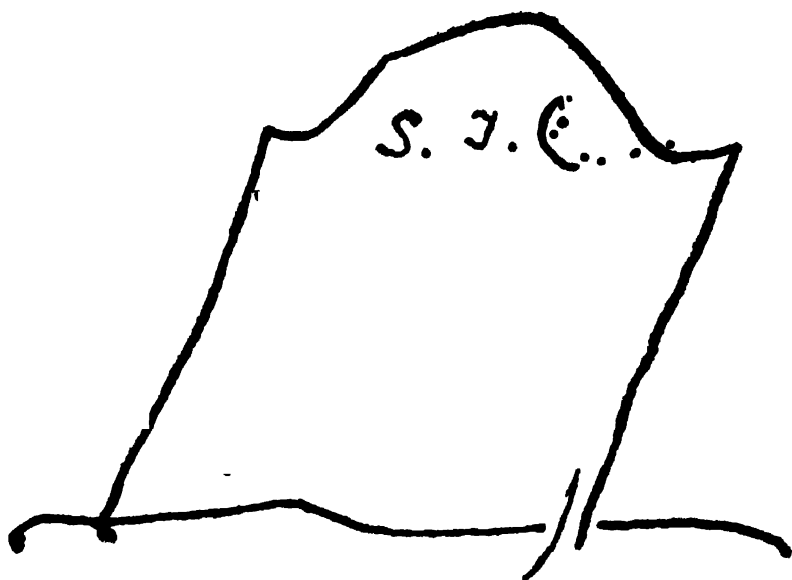
Translation.

*“In truth, he’s no Beauty!” cry’d Moll, Poll, and Tab;
But they all of them own’d He’d the gift of the Gab.*

My best-love to Mr. Aders, and believe that as I have been, so I ever remain your affectionate and trusty friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S. I like the tombstone very much.



The lines when printed would probably have on the preceding page the advertisement —

EPITAPH ON A POET LITTLE KNOWN, YET BETTER
KNOWN BY THE INITIALS OF HIS NAME THAN BY THE
NAME ITSELF.

S.T.C.

Stop, Christian Passer-by! Stop, Child of God!
And read with gentle heart. Beneath this sod
A Poet lies: or that, which once seem'd He.
O lift one thought in prayer for S.T.C.
That He, who many a year with toilsome breath,
Found Death in Life, may here find Life in Death.
Mercy for Praise—to be forgiven for Fame
He ask'd, and hoped thro' Christ. DO THOU the Same.

136. To J. H. Green

1833

Sunday night, April 8, 1833.

It is seldom, my dearest friend, that I find myself differing from you in judgements of any sort. It is more than seldom that I am left in doubt and query on any judgement of yours of a *practical* nature, for on the good ground of some sixteen or more years' experience I feel a take-for-granted faith in the dips and pointings of the needle in every decision of your *total* mind. But in the instance you spoke of this afternoon, viz., your persistent rebuttal of the Temperance Society Man's Request, though I do not feel *sure* that you are not in the right, yet I do feel as if I should have been more delighted and more satisfied if you had intimated your compliance with it. I feel that in this case I should have had *no* doubt; but that my mind would have leapt forwards with content, like a key to a loadstone.

Assuredly you might, at least you would, have a very promising chance of effecting considerable *good*, and you might have commenced your address with your own remark of the superfluity of any light of information afforded to an habitual dram-drinker respecting the unutterable evil and misery of his thralldom. As wisely give a physiological lecture to convince a man of the pain of burns, while he is lying with his head on the bars of the fire-grate, instead of snatching him off. But in stating this, you might most effectingly and preventively for others describe the misery of that condition in which the impulse waxes as the motive wanes. (Mem. There is a striking passage in my "Friend" on this subject, and a no less striking one in a schoolboy theme of mine now in Gillman's possession, and in my own hand, written when I was fourteen, with the simile of the treacherous current of the Maelstrom.) But this might give occasion for the suggestion of one new charitable institution, and the authority of a legislative act, namely, a

Maison de Santé (what do the French call it?) for lunacy and idiocy of the *will*, in which, with the full consent of, or at the direct instance of the patient himself, and with the concurrence of his friends, such a person under the certificate of a physician might be placed under medical and moral coercion. I am convinced that London would furnish a hundred volunteers in as many days from the gin-shops, who would swallow their glass of poison in order to get courage to present themselves to the hospital in question. And a similar institution might exist for a higher class of will-maniacs or impotents. Had such a house of health been in existence, I know who would have entered himself as a patient some five and twenty years ago.

Second class. To the persons still capable of self-cure; and lastly, to the young who have only begun, and not yet begun—[add to this] the urgency of connecting the Temperance Society with the Christian churches of all denominations,—the *classes* known to each other, and deriving strength from *religion*. This is a beautiful part, or might have been made so, of the Wesleyan Church.

These are but raw hints, but unless the mercy of God should remove me from my sufferings earlier than I dare hope or pray for, we will talk the subject over again; as well as the reason *why* spirits in any form as such are so much more dangerous, morally and in relation to the forming a habit, than beer or wine. Item: if a government were truly fraternal, a healthsome and sound beer would be made universal; aye, and for the lower half of the middle classes wine might be imported, good and generous, from sixpence to eightpence per quart.

God bless you and your ever affectionate

S. T. COLERIDGE

137. To Miss Anne R. Scott

1833

Grove, Highgate,

Monday, August 26, 1833.

. . . Women are too veracious creatures, and set too little value on a good Joke—a certain degree of Obtuseness in this respect I have ever considered among the characteristic traits, nay, *charms*, of Womanhood: and have a hundred times noticed it, not only, in amiable Females, but in the most intelligent, and of the finest talents: and often, when I have laughed heartily at the simplicity, with which the whole *Joke* of a Tale, told only *as* a Joke, has been overlooked on the sudden moral feeling excited by the supposition of its actual occurrence, I have been conscious of an inward Love-thrill the meanwhile, and an enlivened *respect*: for it was truly *feminine*. Dorothy Wordsworth, the Sister of our great Poet, is a Woman of Genius, as well as manifold acquirements; and but for the absorption of her whole Soul in her Brother's fame and writings would, perhaps, in a different style have been as great a Poet as Himself. Once, she being present, I told one of these good stories, the main drollery of which rests on their utter *unbelievability as actual fact*—viz.—of a Surgeon, who having restored to life two or three persons who had attempted to hang or drown themselves; and having been afterwards importuned by them for Help and Maintenance on the plea, that having forced life upon them against their own will and wish, he was bound to support it; had ventured, that he would never interfere in any such accidents without having first ascertained 'whether the individual wished it or no. On a summer day, while on a water-party, one of the Rowers in some unaccountable way fell over-board and disappeared. But on his re-emersion the Surgeon caught hold of his Hair and lifting his head, and chest above the water said—Now, my

good Fellow! did you really mean to drown yourself! What is your own wish?—O—O. O——! (sobbed out the man)—a sickly Wife—and seven small children!—“Hal poor Fellow! No Wonder Then!”—exclaimed the Surgeon, and instantly popped him under again. The party were all on the brink of a loud Laugh, when Dorothy Wordsworth, with tears sparkling in her eyes, cried out—Bless me! but was not that very *in-human*!—This Stroke of exquisite Simplicity and true singleness of heart, made us almost roll off our chairs; but was there one of the Party, that did not love Dorothy the more for it? I trust, not one . . .

1833

138. To T. E. Finden

November 6, 1833.

Mr. S. T. Coleridge presents his respects to Mr. Finden. There are two pen or pencil Drawings of him at Highgate, the one (and in point of something like expression, the best) taken off hand, some 15 years ago, by Mr. Leslie,—another, done very recently, by a young German Artist,—a likeness certainly; but with such unhappy pensity of the Nose and idiotic Drooping of the Lip, with a certain pervading *Woodeness* of the whole countenance, that it has not been thought guilty of any great Flattery by Mr. Coleridge's Friends. Such as they are however, either is at Mr. Finden's service—or perhaps the Artist may be inclined to see them and to select one or the other and judge whether the defects of the later portrait may not be removed. Mr. S.T.C. will be found at home, “The Grove, Highgate” any day after 1 o'clock. His ill health does not permit him to mention an earlier hour. A Friend of S. T. Coleridge's wrote under a portrait of him—“A glow-worm with a pin stuck thro' it, as seen in broad daylight.”

139. To Joseph Henry Green

1834

Highgate,

March 18, 1834.

MY DEAREST FRIEND

This night, Monday, 9 o'clock Harriet noticed a peculiar red streak or splash, running from my left eye which had been for many days at morn and night *weepy* and *weak*, down the cheek along by that old tumor of my left cheek, which I date from the Top of the Brocken, Hartz. Midsummer midnight, 1800, or 1799, I forget which. I have been the whole day unwell, and with old duodenal umbilical uneasiness while I lay in bed, and when I got up sick and wind-strangled—As soon as Harriet noticed the red streak, I immediately felt by the application of my finger a sensible difference of heat between that [and] the corresponding part near the other ear—and sent for Mr. Taylor, who deems it a slight erysipelas, *Erysipelatoid Erythema*—the very thing that carried off my acquaintance—friend Sir George Beaumont, who had likewise the same tumour, in nape of the neck and below the chin, in 5 days from its first very unalarming appearance. Now as I should like to see you before I went, if to go I am, and leave with you the sole Depositorium of my mind and aspirations, which God may suggest to me—therefore if you can, come to me during the week.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

140. To Miss Eliza Nixon

During Coleridge's last illness (he died on 25th July, 1834) Miss Eliza Nixon was one of those who sent him messages and the little gifts that please invalids.

June 14, 1834.

Thanks, dear Eliza, for your sweet flowers so Van Huysum-like arranged. But earnest thanks and from deeper down in the Heart for your far sweeter letter. That my sense is from illness become obtuse to the *fragrance* of Flowers, I but little regret, but O! let my eyes be closed when their Beauty is no longer revealed to me, and finds no counterpart in my mind. 1834

141. To Mrs. Gillman and
J. H. Green

July 24, 1834.

MOST DEAR MR. GREEN!
MOST DEAR MRS GILLMAN
MY SPECIAL FRIENDS,

Do impress it according to . . . [sic] and love on my nephew and son-in-law, Henry N. Colledge, and through him on all who bear my name, that I beg, expect, and would fain hope of them according to their means such a contribution as may suffice collectively for a handsome Legacy for that most faithful, affectionate and disinterested servant, Harriet Macklin. Henry can explain. I have never asked for myself.

S. T. COLLEDGE.

This note was written only half an hour before Coleridge lost consciousness, and eleven hours before his death. Harriet Macklin looked after Coleridge during the last seven or eight years of his life. Lamb, who was too much distressed to attend Coleridge's funeral, answered his friend's appeal by giving five guineas to his faithful nurse.

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